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YOUNG GEORGE WASHINGTON

WAYNE WHIPPLE



1929.

Hoover's Inauguration

Significant Dates in the Life of the Thirty-first President

Outstanding dates in the life of Herbert Clark Hoover, inaugurated today as thirty-first President of the United States, are as follows:

- Born at West Branch, Iowa, August 10, 1874.
- Graduated from Leland Stanford University, June, 1895.
- Married to Lou Henry, February 10, 1899.
- Chairman American Relief Commission to England, 1914-1915.
- Chairman Belgian Relief Commission, 1914-1919.
- United States Food Administrator, April 7, 1917.
- Resigned as food administrator July 1, 1919.
- Appointed Secretary of Commerce by President Harding, March 5, 1921.
- Nominated for Presidency, June 14, 1928.
- Elected President of the United States, November 6, 1928.
- Inaugurated as President, March 4, 1929.

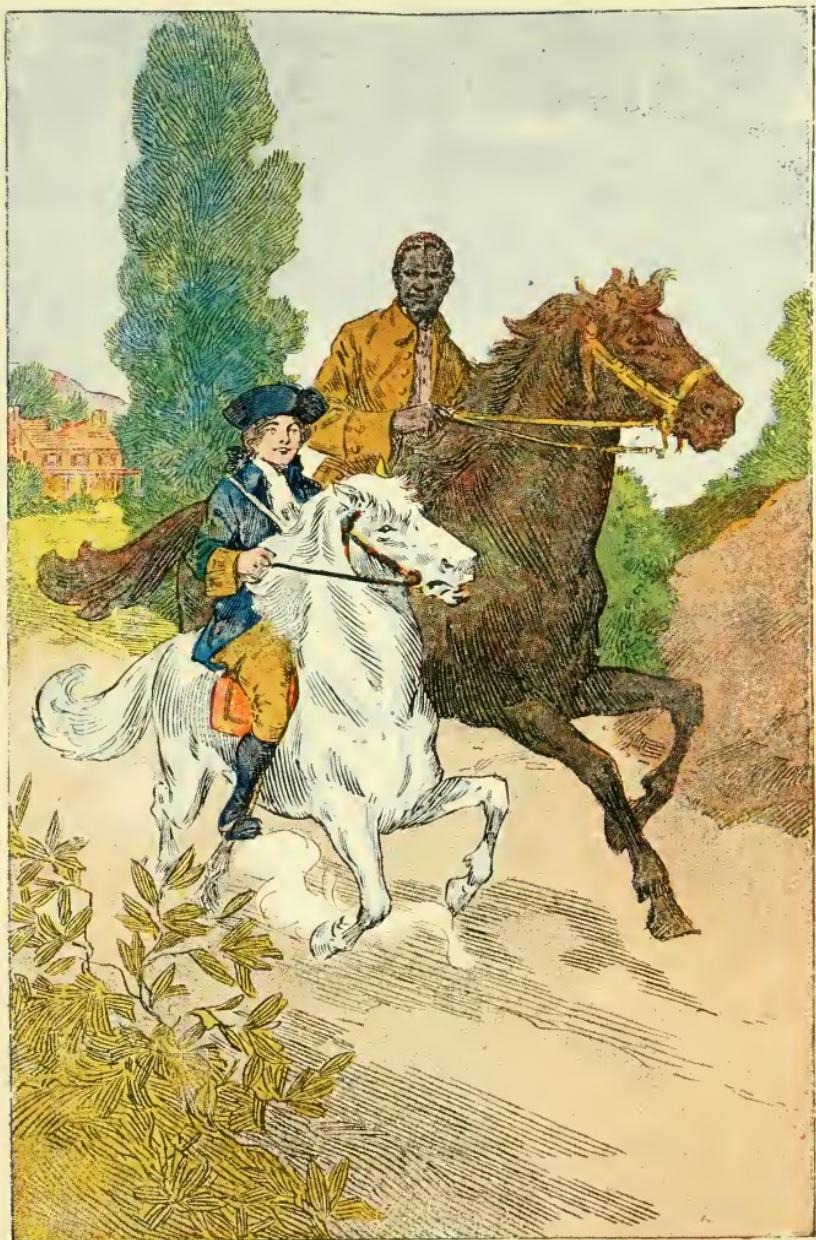
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AA
(Washington,
Whipple)

William Henry Waller

Feb. 1929





Frontispiece.

LITTLE GEORGE RODE TO SCHOOL ON HIS PONY.

The Story of Young George Washington

By

WAYNE WHIPPLE

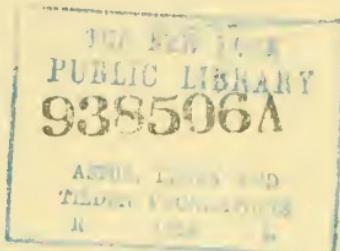
Author of The Story of the American Flag, The Story of the Liberty Bell, The Story of the White House, The Story of Young Benjamin Franklin, The Story of Young Abraham Lincoln, etc.

Illustrated

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1938

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THE STORY OF
YOUNG GEORGE WASHINGTON

INTRODUCTION

THE REAL WASHINGTON, BOY AND MAN

“I AM not surprised at what George has done, for he was always a good boy,” is the remark that General Washington’s mother made when she was told that her “boy” had been elected the first President of the United States. Although he was the greatest man in America, and one of the grandest men that ever lived; George Washington was always her “boy.” It is as a boy—for he was “a real boy”—and as a kind, unselfish, brave, true man, that we are to consider him.

This is not easy to do, because most people have mistaken ideas about Washington. Those who knew him best, and could have told just what he did and said, were possessed of strange notions as to what ought to be told about him.

So, instead of letting others see him as he really was, they managed to keep people from

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knowing the true George Washington. They tried hard to make him “show off” like a hero, instead of telling simply what he did and how he did it, so that everybody could see what a hero he was. In their vain attempts to make him appear more than human, they did not show him to have been the live, warm-hearted man he was. It was almost as if they had patted and packed together a snow man and set it up, putting an old sword in its clumsy, cold hand, and exclaimed :

“Behold General George Washington!”

To make him talk and act “big” all the time, as a demi-god or a fabled hero, like Hercules or Alexander the Great, they succeeded only in making him behave like an ridiculous little prig, as a boy, and appear pompous and self-conceited after he grew up. The author of the first life of Washington for young people was a wandering preacher named Weems. It was he who first told about little George and his hatchet. He made the story sound quite silly because of the high-flown preachments he put into the mouths of little George and his “Pa.” But this was not

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entirely Mr. Weems's fault. In the best books for children of that time, written by Maria Edgeworth, Jane Taylor, and others, even down to fifty years after Washington's day, the fathers, tutors, and "Uncle Georges" were always "lecturing" the unnatural children under their charge. Yet boys and girls—and their older relatives, too—eagerly read those highly moral and entertaining tales for "the young," and pronounced them "instructive and edifying."

Indeed, the eccentric parson was not the only offender, in this respect, against the Father of his Country, for Washington's namesake and adopted son, George Washington Parke Custis, seemed sometimes to be trying too hard to make his immortal step-grandfather show off like a hero. His story of the boy Washington breaking a certain colt sounds, if possible, even more foolish than Mr. Weems's account of little George and his little hatchet. In Mr. Custis's description the sorrel colt is referred to as a "steed," a "courser," with other "heroic" phrases, and the story sounds as if the writer had tried to make his foster father outshine young Alexander the Great in taming the fabu-

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lous horse, Bucephalus, as described by Plutarch.

You shall read this story of George's desperate ride on an unbroken horse, and several of Mr. Weems's moral tales in "The Story of Young George Washington," and decide for yourselves whether a boy would ever use such absurd language in talking with his father or mother. A few of these stilted stories will show also what our parents and grandparents enjoyed when there was nothing better to read. And those old-fashioned tales may help explain how such mistaken ideas of Washington began to prevail.

Still others besides inexperienced writers of children's stories and personal recollections are at fault for spreading wrong impressions of Washington. An eminent historian, the Rev. Dr. Jared Sparks, president of Harvard College, spent many years in painstaking research, collecting Washington's letters, journals, speeches, accounts, and so forth, and published them, in twelve exhaustive volumes, as "The Writings of Washington." But whenever Dr. Sparks thought he could improve on what was actually written, he deemed it his duty to change

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the words of Washington so they would sound better. Then he published his “Writings of Washington” without explaining that they were erased, corrected and improved, as if Washington were a schoolboy and Dr. Sparks his teacher, printing only what he thought his pupil *ought to have written!*

But that teacher did all this with the best intentions: he meant to give people only what was “good for them.” For instance, wherever Washington referred to General Putnam as “Old Put,” as that doughty general was called by everybody, Dr. Sparks changed it to the more respectful title; and once, on receiving a very small sum of money for a very large outlay, Washington wrote that the extremely small amount was “but a flea-bite at present,” and Dr. Sparks changed this to read that the amount was “totally inadequate to our demands at this time!”

Of course, “Old Put” and “flea-bite” do not sound very elegant, but Washington was so dignified as a rule, that it is a relief to know that he *could* unbend and say things that prove that he was much more like Abraham Lincoln than people imagine. Although none of these

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little changes seem very important, yet in reading the “Writings of Washington” you are never quite certain whether the passage before you was written by Washington or by Sparks, and you have no means of knowing, for historians who have gone quite deep into the matter say that Dr. Sparks actually burned some of Washington’s precious original letters and manuscripts!

It is very hard to believe that so great a historian as good Dr. Sparks really was could have done anything so reckless. If he did it he was like the little boy who wrote to hundreds of people asking for their autographs, and after he had made a large collection, he carefully copied them all into an autograph album, in his own neat handwriting—then he burned the original signatures! But there was more excuse for such thoughtlessness in an ignorant boy.

Therefore, the strange parson was not the only writer to spread mistaken notions about the Father of his Country. Weems’s story about George and the cherry tree is more widely known than anything Washington ever did as Commander-in-chief, or President of the United

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States. His book, queer as it sounds to us now, was read by many thousands of people who never would have had the patience to go through the dry, long-drawn-out lives of Washington that were written at that time. So Mr. Weems did his country a great service.

A recent French traveler, after visiting America, published a book in which he stated that young Americans have a deeper regard for truth than the children of any other nation in the world, because of the story of little George Washington, the boy who "could not tell a lie."

The book would have done no end of good if it had been read by no one else in the world but a certain tall, lank youth, named Abraham Lincoln—a brave young pioneer, in many respects like George Washington himself—though "Abe" did not know it. Lying on the floor before the open fire nearly all night, young Lincoln read till he was too sleepy to keep his eyes open any longer, then he put the book in a chink between the logs of the cabin where he could reach for it the first thing on waking.

It was to this book that President-elect Lincoln referred in an address in the New Jersey State House, while on his way to Washington

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to take the helm of the Ship of State. President Lincoln used to tell his friends that nearly all the history he knew he had learned from a set of biographies written for young people. Nothing can interest and inspire the heart of youth like the real life-story of a hero.

Abraham Lincoln has given the world an object lesson in real heroes. In his barren, homely life he manifested the heroism of the heart. There is where all heroism begins—and never ends—whether illustrated by Chevalier Bayard, that knight “without fear and without reproach;” or by the martyr or patriot who gives his life for religion or country; or by a Washington or Lincoln who, risking all, giving all, lays his life and fortunes upon the altar of his country.

George Washington, like Abraham Lincoln, began by showing his deep love for family, friends, and neighbors. He was faithful “through thick and thin,” sometimes after he had been hurt to the heart by rank injustice and treachery.

To misrepresent his inner life and pure motives is the greatest harm that can be done to the memory of George Washington. In this

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he has been “hurt in the house of his friends,” who persisted in making him appear pompous, “distant,” and otherwise ridiculous.

George Washington had the true heroism of the heart and home before he could become the leading patriot of his country—the first of many heroes—and one of the greatest in the whole history of the world. He was heroic all the time—not merely while on horseback brandishing a sword. While he was a general he used the spade, the ax, and the crowbar much more than the sword.

“The Story of Young George Washington” tells especially of Washington’s boyhood and youth, and of the causes and conditions under which his heroic heart began to express itself in his marvelous career. It is the story of the ax and the spade, as well as the sword. The stories here given are to reveal his great, passionate heart.

“He was always a good boy,” as his mother said. He was a dutiful and devoted son, a kind brother, an indulgent step-father and uncle (he never had any children of his own), and a loyal, long-suffering friend. Instead of being cold, like a statue of marble, he had warm, red blood

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coursing in his veins. This is not a history of the General or the President; it is a life of *George* as well as of *Washington*.

WAYNE WHIPPLE.

THE STORY OF YOUNG GEORGE WASHINGTON

CHAPTER I

WASHINGTON'S FIGHTING ANCESTORS

JOHN BALL, 1381 AND 1781

GEORGE WASHINGTON had plenty of fighting blood in his veins. His mother, Mary Ball Washington, was descended from John Ball, who, over one hundred years before Columbus discovered America, went about England on horseback, preaching that all men are free and equal. It was he who originated this quaint couplet, which he often took for his text:

“When Adam delved and Eve span,
Who was then the gentleman?”

The poor people were delighted to hear that they were just as good as their “betters,” and crowded around the “crazy preacher of Kent,”

The Story of Young

as John Ball was called. But they broke out in a small rebellion led by Wat, the Tyler, or roofer, against their young king, Richard the Second, and his nobles.

In those days a man was called crazy if he talked about liberty and equality, and John Ball paid for his rashness with his life. If the *mad* preacher, on the scaffold in 1381, could have looked forward four hundred years, he would have beheld a sight to gladden his liberty-loving eyes. For, on the then unknown Western Continent, in 1781, at Yorktown, he would have seen George Washington, his grandson of about the twentieth generation, finishing the fight which he, John Ball, had so bravely begun. For the brave *priest* was beheaded because he claimed to believe in the sublime doctrine stated in the Declaration of Independence:

“That all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.”

John Ball was Washington’s greatest fighting ancestor on his mother’s side. George was

George Washington

said to resemble his mother in face and temperament, and in solid, homely common-sense. Very little is really known about Mary Ball Washington; nearly everything that is told of her is inferred from the fact that she was the mother of her illustrious son. No doubt she was a beautiful girl, "the belle of Northern Neck" (that part of Virginia, lying between the Potomac and the Rappahannock Rivers), when she was married to Captain Augustine Washington, then a widower with two sons living. She was known in after life as a woman of strong will and temper, of strict integrity, of sterling character, and of few words.

WILLIAM DE WESSYNGTON TO COLONEL JOHN WASHINGTON

On his father's side the family name is recognized four centuries farther back than the time of reckless John Ball. In the English records a reference is made to a grant of land from Edgar, the Saxon king, to Athelunold Was-sengatone, in 963 A. D. Over a hundred years after this, William the Conqueror, rewarding his valiant knights for helping him vanquish

The Story of Young

the Saxons, gave an estate in England to William de Hertburn, whose descendant of the same name was, in 1183, in possession of the manor and village of Wessyngton, in the County of Durham.

As was the custom, the family took the name of its estate or village, and William de Hertburn was known as William de Wessyngton. The “de” was soon dropped and Wessyngton was pronounced and spelled, down through the centuries, Wessington, Weshington, Wassing-ton, until it became Washington. The names of these knightly descendants of the Norman conquerors, in their various forms, are found in the lists of English chivalry all through the Middle Ages, and many of them engaged in heroic enterprises to be eclipsed only by one great American name which should evermore be “first in war.”

Lawrence Washington, founder of the branch of the family that came to America, was for years mayor of Northampton, and purchased, in 1538, the manor of Sulgrave, Northamptonshire, England, from Henry the Eighth, out of a lot of confiscated church property. This estate came to be known as “Washington Manor.”

George Washington

The Washingtons were closely identified with the fortunes of ill-fated King Charles the First. Sir Henry Washington distinguished himself by bringing about the capture of Bristol, in 1643, and was in command of Worcester, three years later, heroically holding that city after his ammunition was exhausted.

The reverses that attended the fall of the king and the rise of Cromwell had so impoverished the Washington family that they lost the manor at Sulgrave, and John and Lawrence, two "younger sons," left their humbler home at Little Brington to seek their fortunes in a new country. After stopping a while at the island of Barbados, they came to Virginia in 1657, seven years later than William Ball, of Kent, England, Mary Ball's ancestor, arrived in the same colony.

John Washington, a powerful young man of twenty-three, took up immense tracts of land on the Potomac, around Pope's and Bridges' Creeks and settled there as a tobacco planter. He was elected to the House of Burgesses and appointed a colonel of militia. In a war with the Indians, in 1675, Colonel John Washington terrified the savages so that they named him

The Story of Young

Canotocarius, "Destroyer of Villages," a title they afterward gave to George, his illustrious great-grandson. He died in 1677, leaving a great estate to his son Lawrence, who became the father of Captain Augustine Washington, who married Mary Ball, in 1730.

So George Washington, "the first American," came into the world with a rare military heritage, in Church and in State, both in the Old World and the New.

CHAPTER II

THE LITTLE BOY WASHINGTON

THE PLACE AND THE DAY

CAPTAIN AUGUSTINE WASHINGTON brought Mary Ball, his beautiful young bride, home to "Wakefield," his own birthplace, a slightly estate overlooking the Potomac. The place had been settled by his grandfather, Colonel John Washington. The house was a rather dingy old story-and-a-half wooden structure built on a

George Washington

brick foundation, with four large rooms on the ground floor, and several small bedrooms in the low half-story upstairs. It had a long slanting roof which came nearly down to the ground at the back, and outside, at each end, stood a huge, high chimney.

The little house was surrounded by a spacious garden, which sloped toward the tide-water river, so wide there as to be really an arm of Chesapeake Bay. The grounds abounded in fig and other fruit trees, laurel, and wild grapes, honeysuckle and sweetbrier roses which clambered and clustered over stones and stumps along the steep river bank. "Wakefield" was, all together, a beautiful estate.

Augustine Washington was accounted a wealthy man in his day. Aside from several plantations his father, Lawrence Washington, had left him, he had acquired others. He was an energetic man of affairs, and his various enterprises seemed to have been successful. He became a leading member of the Principio Company, a sort of syndicate of English adventurers, which operated certain iron mines in the colony.

In connection with this he had established a furnace on his estate in Stafford County, and

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controlled the teaming of the ore from the mines. He was also master of a ship which carried the iron to the English market; from this he received the title of Captain. On his return trips his ship came loaded with household goods and supplies, farm implements and tools, carriages, wearing apparel, and even groceries, for nearly everything the planters used, or wore, or ate, had to be brought from the Mother Country. Sometimes he brought back gangs of convicts, condemned to work for years in the mines and tobacco fields, instead of serving their terms in prison.

The chief product of the soil of Virginia was tobacco. Therefore the principal occupation was growing, curing, and shipping tobacco, which Captain Washington was able to deliver from his own landing at "Wakefield," sometimes in his own ship, direct to the London market. Tobacco was not only the staple product but the currency of the colony, generally used instead of money. A slave, a coach, a cow, or a gown cost so many pounds—not dollars nor pounds *sterling*, as in England, but *pounds of tobacco!*

There were few cities in America in those

George Washington

days. Even the greatest, Philadelphia, Boston, and New York, would hardly be considered large towns to-day. Most of the people lived in the country, as farmers and planters, in the fertile valleys along the navigable rivers. Their homes were scattered so far apart that it was miles, usually, to their nearest neighbors. The country, a few miles back from these valleys, was an almost unbroken wilderness, generally forests, inhabited by savages, or rough, venturesome people speaking foreign tongues, and nearly as wild, or rude, as the Indians themselves.

As the planters could get about in boats to the distant villages, or visit their neighbors, there were very few roads of any kind, and none were what would be called good roads to-day. Yet many a family in Virginia made it a matter of pride and dignity to drive with an English "coach and four," though their heavy carriages of gilt and glass lumbered and jolted over roots, logs and stumps, and floundered through mud-holes and swamps.

The aristocracy of Virginia, in that day, was said to be the proudest in the world. Among the famous "First Families of Virginia" (or

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“F. F. V.’s”) were the Lees, Masons, Byrds, Carys, and perhaps a few others. Despite the gentle lineage of the Washingtons, and the wealth and enterprise of Captain Augustine, they were looked upon as belonging to the “minor gentry,” as those were called who were not of noble origin, but related to titled families in England. Besides, the Washingtons, like many of the planters, were “land poor.” They owned large estates, but had little money to spend for luxuries and privileges. The men worked on their estates with their slaves and convicts whose servitude made all kinds of manual labor seem mean and low to those descendants of English noblemen.

As there were few good schools and colleges in America, Virginian youths were sent to England to be educated or “finished.” Captain Washington himself had gone to school at Appleby, near Whitehaven, and he proposed to send his sons, Lawrence and young Augustine, to the same school as soon as they were old enough to take the studies and bear the long separation.

It was upon these strange, contrasting scenes that little George Washington opened his round

George Washington

baby eyes in that old house at "Wakefield," Westmoreland County, Virginia, on the 11th or 22d, of February, 1731, or 1732.

"OLD STYLE" AND NEW

It may be well to explain how that illustrious infant managed to have two birthdays, eleven days apart, and how he could possibly be born in two different *years*—that is, on the 11th of February, 1731, and the 22d of February, 1732. This was because the 11th of February, Old Style, became the 22d of February, New Style. According to the Julian calendar, established nearly two thousand years ago by Julius Cæsar, there were three hundred and sixty-five and one-fourth days in a year. Now every schoolboy knows that it takes the earth about eleven minutes *less* than three hundred and sixty-five and one-fourth days to revolve around the sun, which makes the solar year. Therefore, every new year since the time of Julius Cæsar really began over eleven minutes sooner than indicated by Cæsar's calendar. In 1582, Pope Gregory XIII, finding that the Julian calendar, by falling behind eleven minutes every year, was then

The Story of Young

eleven *days* behind sun time, so he issued an order to the world to turn its clock eleven days ahead. The British Parliament did not get round to do this until George Washington had grown to be a tall young man. On the 2d of September, 1752, England took this step by act of Parliament, which ordered that the next day should be, not September 3d, but September 14th, thus turning the calendar of all English-speaking people forward eleven days. As this should have been done before, everybody, reckoning back to the day of Washington's birth, adds eleven days to the behind-hand count and makes it February 22d, New Style, instead of February 11th, Old Style.

Now for the *years*, 1731 and 1732. At the same time with the Gregorian correction, the year was made to begin January 1st, instead of March 25th, which had been New Year's Day according to the Old Style. So if the New Year began January 1st, February came in 1732.

If the year 1732 did not begin until March 25th, February was counted as next to the last month of 1731. This is the reason the day on which George Washington was born was February 11th, 1731, Old Style, or February 22d,

George Washington

1732, according to the present way of reckoning, or New Style, and why Washington's birthday is now celebrated on the 22d of February.

Here is a reduced fac-simile of the record of his birth, just as George himself wrote it, at the age of seventeen, in his mother's family Bible:

“George Washington, son to Augustine and Mary, his wife, was born the 11th day of February, 1731-2, about ten in the morning, and was baptized the 3d of April following. Mr. Beverly Whiting and Captain Christopher Brooks, Godfathers, and Mrs. Mildred Gregory, Godmother.”

THE GOOD LESSONS GEORGE'S FATHER TAUGHT HIM

When Baby George came into the Washington family, Lawrence, the older brother was fourteen, and Austin, as young Augustine was called at home, was about twelve years old. George had but little recollection of his half-brothers until they came home, at different times, from Appleby School, in England. The

The Story of Young

young mother, therefore, had no care of her two stepsons, for both were well grown by the time they had finished school. Lawrence did not come home to stay, for he had caught the fighting fever in England, and soon started off to the West Indies to join General Wentworth and Admiral Vernon to fight against the Spanish colonies in the West Indies and on the mainland of South America.

Mary Washington had enough to do in caring for her own little brood. When George, her first born, was only sixteen months old a baby girl was born, whom they named Elizabeth, but she was always called Betty. Then, at intervals of two years or less, came Samuel, John Augustine, always affectionately called "Jack," and Charles, who was six years younger than George. Last of all, a wee baby sister, named Mildred for the aunt, Mrs. Gregory, George's godmother.

The first sorrow came to George's life when he was eight years old, as they laid away the beautiful baby form of Mildred, whose span of life as the pet of the household had been very short—only fourteen months.

But this made the bond still closer between

George Washington

him and his only remaining sister, big, bouncing Betty, who was so near his own age. Betty grew to be a large woman, so much resembling George in features that, after he became celebrated, she delighted in dressing up in military uniform, and, it is said, she was sometimes mistaken for the General himself.

Between George and his second brother, "Jack," there existed a deep devotion, which the General and President continued to his brother's children, after "dear brother Jack" had gone the way of all the earth.

For a number of years Captain Washington, George's father, had been convinced that "Wakefield" was not a healthful place to bring up a growing family. Two of the children of his first wife, Jane, had died in infancy and their mother had followed them, in 1728.

Two years before this, though he owned other estates, he purchased from his sister a high and beautiful site, about fifty miles up the Potomac, then called the Hunting Creek Place, which she had inherited from their father. To this hill estate Captain Washington removed, in 1735, with his wife and three little children. Jack was "the baby" then, though they were all in-

The Story of Young

fants, for George was only three. On this lovely height (not named Mount Vernon until about ten years later) the young Washington family spent four memorable years. Here George learned to know his father, whom he loved dearly, and whose memory he devoutly revered.

In the absence of the older sons, Captain Washington devoted all the time at his disposal to George. His frequent absences, on business, visiting other plantations, the mine, the foundry, and sometimes going to England, seemed to increase his devotion to George's training while he could be at home. Parson Weems's "Life of Washington," for young people, gives the only stories told of this time in the life of the little Washington boy.

In those days it was not considered wise or proper to tell tales about children. "Little children should be seen and not heard," was the common saying. As an excuse for repeating such things Mr. Weems evidently thought it was necessary to make little George Washington talk and act in a marvelous manner. Here are several of his stories just as he related them in his little book:

George Washington

THE LESSON ON SELFISHNESS

Some idea of Mr. Washington's plan of education in this respect may be collected from the following anecdote, related to me twenty years ago by an aged lady, who was a distant relative, and, when a girl, spent much of her time in the family:

"On a fine morning," said she, "in the fall of 1737, Mr. Washington, having little George by the hand, came to the door and asked my cousin and myself to walk with him to the orchard, promising he would show us a fine sight. On arriving at the orchard we were presented with a fine sight indeed. The whole earth as far as we could see was strewed with fruit; and yet the trees were bending under the weight of the apples, which hung in clusters like grapes, and vainly strove to hide their blushing cheeks behind the green leaves.

"'Now, George,' said his father, 'look here, my son. Don't you remember when this cousin of yours brought you that large fine apple last spring, how hardly I could prevail on you to divide with your brothers and sisters;

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though I promised you if you would but do it, God Almighty would give you plenty of apples this fall ?'

"Poor George could not say a word; but hanging down his head looked quite confused, while with his naked toes he scratched in the soft ground.

"Now look up, my son," continued his father, "look up, George. See there, how richly the blessed God has made good my promise to you. Wherever you turn your eyes, you see trees loaded with fine fruit; many of them breaking down; the ground is covered with mellow apples, more than you could eat, my son, in all your lifetime."

"George looked in silence on the wide wilderness of fruit. He marked the busy humming bees, and heard the gay notes of the birds; then lifting his eyes, filling with shining moisture, to his father, he softly said:

"Well, pa, only forgive me this time; and see if I ever be so stingy any more.' "

A LITTLE LECTURE ON SPEAKING THE TRUTH

Never did the wise Ulysses take more pains with his beloved Telemachus,

George Washington

than did Mr. Washington with George, to inspire him with an early love of truth.

“Truth, George,” said he, “is the loveliest quality of youth. I would ride fifty miles, my son, to see the little boy whose heart is so honest, and his lips so pure, that we may depend upon every word he says. Oh, how lovely does such a child appear in the eyes of everybody! His parents dote upon him. His relations glory in him. They are constantly praising him to their children, whom they beg to imitate him. They are often sending for him to visit them; and receive him, when he comes, with as much joy as if he were a little angel come to set pretty examples to their children.

“But, oh! How different, George, is the case with the boy who is so given to lying that nobody can believe a word he says! He is looked at with aversion wherever he goes, and parents dread to see him among their children. Oh, George, my son, rather than to see you come to this pass, dear as you are to my heart, gladly would I assist to nail you up in your little coffin, and follow you to your grave. Hard, indeed, would it

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be to me to give up my son, whose little feet are always ready to run about with me, and whose fondly looking eyes and sweet prattle make so large a part of my happiness. But still I would give him up, rather than to see him a common liar."

This, you'll say, was sowing good seed. Yes, it was: and the crop, thank God, was, as I believe it will ever be, where a man acts the true parent; that is, the Guardian Angel by his child.

THE STORY OF THE LITTLE HATCHET AND THE CHERRY TREE

The following anecdote is a case in point. It is too valuable to be lost, and too true to be doubted; for it was communicated to me by the same excellent lady to whom I am indebted for the last:

"When George," said she, "was about six years old, he was made the wealthy master of a hatchet, of which, like most little boys, he was immoderately fond, and was constantly going about chopping everything that came in his way. One day, in the garden, where he often amused himself hacking his

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mother's pea-sticks, he unluckily tried the edge of his hatchet on the body of a beautiful young English cherry tree, which he barked so terribly that I don't believe the tree ever got the better of it. The next morning the old gentleman, finding out what had befallen his tree, which, by the by, was a great favorite, came into the house and with much warmth asked for the mischievous author, declaring, at the same time, that he would not have taken five guineas for the tree. Nobody could tell him anything about it. Presently George and his hatchet made their appearance.

"'George,' said his father, 'do you know who killed that beautiful little cherry tree yonder in the garden?'

"This was a tough question, and George staggered under it for a moment; but quickly recovered himself; and looking at his father, with the sweet face of youth, brightened with the inexpressible charm of all-conquering truth, he bravely cried out:

"'I can't tell a lie, pa; you know I can't tell a lie. I did cut it with my hatchet.'

"'Run to my arms, you dearest boy,' cried his father in transports. 'Run to

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my arms. Glad am I, George, that you killed my tree; for you have paid me for it a thousand fold. Such an act of heroism in my son is more worth than a thousand trees, though blossomed with silver, and their fruits of purest gold.' ”

This, then, is Parson Weems's description of the immortal encounter of the Little Hatchet *versus* the Cherry Tree. It would have been far better if he had repeated it as that “excellent lady,” the Washingtons' cousin, related it to him.

Captain Washington, at this time, was a little over forty, though referred to in the story as “the old gentleman;” and that “youth,” whose “sweet face brightened with the inexpressible charm of all-conquering truth,” was a boy of six! Also, it requires quite a stretch of the mind to think of any father exclaiming to his small boy: “Glad am I that you killed my tree,” and, “Such an act of heroism in my son is more worth than a thousand trees—*though blossomed with silver, and their fruits of purest gold.*”

This last sentence does not sound like a remark even the kindest parent would make to his

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little boy just after he had “girdled” a valuable tree. It reads more like the close of a flowery sermon by a very sentimental minister.

THE BURNING OF THE HOUSE AND GOING TO SCHOOL TO “HOBBY”

In the spring of 1739, while Captain Washington was away from home, the house at Hunting Creek Place took fire. Some sparks from a bonfire, made of a pile of rubbish in the garden, were blown up on the roof and a blaze started in the dry shingles. The house was so far up on the hill that the fire gained considerable headway before the slaves could carry much water up the steep climb from the Potomac River. While the frightened blacks were wildly fighting the flames with pails of water, Mrs. Washington showed her cool-headed common-sense by moving out the best of the furniture and valuables, with the help of the cook and a maid. Instead of wasting time in idle regrets, or watching the burning ruins, with the children and servants, she ordered dinner made ready and the table set in a small building near by.

So George, now seven years old, passed

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through the excitement of a second removal—this time to Stafford County, on the Rappahannock, opposite Fredericksburg, which was a center for his father's iron interests. From this home he began to go to school in a cabin in the midst of a grove of young pines which had grown up in a worn-out tobacco field, near Falmouth Church.

The sexton of this church was a good-natured, one-eyed man named Grove, who kept a "field school," as it was called. He was nicknamed "Hobby" by his pupils, who do not seem to have had much respect for him. He was called a "convict," but he must have been a good sort of a man, or the families of that neighborhood would not have allowed their small sons to be his pupils.

"Hobby" could teach George little more than the "A B C's," but he took great pride in saying, according to Weems, after his former pupil became President, that "'twas he, who, between his knees, had laid the foundation of George Washington's greatness."

At first George rode to school in front of Peter, a negro slave. When he was given a pony for his own, Peter rode beside him, for the

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boy fell off occasionally, to his mother's great alarm. She was so fond that she was afraid to have him go into the least danger, or take part in sports in which all the real boys of that day engaged with a royal will.

GEORGE AND THE BUSTLE BOY

George soon developed the military spirit of his ancestors. This was brought home to him by the letters of his adored half-brother, Captain Lawrence, who had shown signal bravery in the attack on Cartagena. The "field school" was soon divided into two fighting factions, the little boys carrying cornstalks for guns, and hollow gourds for drums. George was a big, strong boy for his age, and easily became the leader of the English or "white men." His rival, a larger and older boy, named William Bustle, was chief of the enemy, whether French, Spanish, or Indians. The boys fought every day, shooting arrows or throwing snowballs, in winter, from behind the pines in the grove, after the manner of early Indian warfare. Often the boys came together in hand-to-hand conflicts, and then there was much clashing and slashing

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of wooden knives and pulling of one another's long hair, in pretense of scalping.

One writer relates that, during the winter before George was ten, the Bustle boy hit George in the eye with a snowball in which he had packed a stone. The Washington boy was kept at home several days while his mother indignantly treated him for a black eye. Mary Washington urged her husband to interfere. But Captain Washington said:

"No, it's a boys' quarrel. George must learn to fight his own battles."

When the Washington boy went back to school he gave that Bustle boy a sound thrashing. The other boys said George was so mad that nothing seemed to hurt him, and he did not even know when Bustle shouted "Enough!"—so several of them had to pull their white captain off his "Indian" enemy.

A LETTER TO "DICKEY" LEE

Aside from his sister and brothers at home, and the boys in "Hobby's" school, George had a friend about his own age, Richard Henry Lee, whose name was placed high in his country's

George Washington

history, about forty years later, for it was he who moved, in the Continental Congress, the adoption of the Declaration of Independence.

Here is a quaint letter which, it is claimed, George Washington sent, when about ten, to this friend. If he wrote it he must have had help from an older and wiser head than his own:

“DEAR DICKEY: I thank you very much for the pretty picture book you gave me. Sam asked me to show him the pictures and I showed him all the pictures in it; and I read to him how the tame elephant took care of the master’s little boy, and put him on his back and would not let anybody touch his master’s little son. I can read three or four pages sometimes without missing a word. Ma says I may go to see you and stay all day with you next week if it be not rainy. Ma says I may ride my pony, Hero, if Uncle Ben will go with me and lead Hero. I have a little piece of poetry about the picture book you gave me, but I mustn’t tell you who wrote the poetry.

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“G. W.’s compliments to R. H. L.,
And likes his book full well;
Henceforth will count him his friend,
And hopes many happy days he may
spend.

“Your good friend,

“GEORGE WASHINGTON.

“I am going to get a whip-top soon,
and you may see it, and whip it.”

“Sam,” of course, was George’s younger brother, and “Uncle Ben” was an old black slave.

GEORGE LOSES HIS BEST FRIEND

Captain Lawrence, now twenty-four, came home from “the wars” that year, with the intention of going to England soon, and continuing in the king’s service as an officer. But two circumstances changed his plans. The first was that he fell in love with beautiful Anne Fairfax of “Belvoir,” a fine estate on the Potomac four miles below the house that burned down at Hunting Creek Place.

The marriage was to have occurred early in the spring of 1743, but an event put off the

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happy occasion. While George was away at Choptank, twenty miles distant, visiting his cousins, "Robin" and "Lal," as they nicknamed Robert and Lawrence, the sons of his father's brother John, he was sent for in great haste and told of the serious illness of Captain Washington, with what was known as gout of the stomach. In an account written as if by Washington himself, the lad's experiences are described by the aged ex-President at Mount Vernon. More than fifty years afterward Washington wrote thus of the great grief that came upon him when a boy of eleven:

"We were merry at supper, when Peter, who was supposed to look after me, arrived with the news of my father's sudden illness. It was the first of my too many experiences of the ravage time brings to all men. I heard the news with a kind of awe, but without realizing how serious, in many ways, was this summons. I rode home behind Peter, and found my mother in a state of distraction. She led me to the bedside of my father, crying out: 'He is dying!'

"The children were around him, and

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he was groaning in great pain; but he kissed us in turn, and said to me, ‘Be good to your mother.’

“I may say that throughout her life I have kept the promise I made him as I knelt, crying, at his bedside. He died that night, and I lost my best friend.”

CHAPTER III

THE BIG BOY WASHINGTON

GEORGE AND HIS MOTHER

THE greater part of his father’s estate was left, according to the custom of the time, to the eldest son, Lawrence. This included the Hunting Creek Place, where their house had burned down four years before, with twenty-five hundred acres and all his interests in the Principio Iron Works, besides the mill and the slaves living on that estate.

To Augustine the father willed “Wakefield,” in Westmoreland County, the place on which George was born.

George Washington

To George he left the farm on the Rappahannock, opposite Fredericksburg, some land on Deep Run, and ten slaves; besides, the property bequeathed to Lawrence was to go to George, as the eldest son of the second wife, if Lawrence should die childless, or if a child born to him should die also. Samuel, John, and Charles each received land and slaves, and their sister Betty four hundred pounds in money.

The young widow held the estates of her young children in trust and was to have the place on which they then lived until George should come of age, but before the ten years elapsed, other property reverted to him, under his father's will, and he never took "Ferry Farm," as they called it, from his mother.

Besides this, Mary Washington had sixteen hundred acres of her own and a special legacy from her husband. It was a large estate, and the good father must have felt, when he made his will, that he was providing liberally for them all.

But the young wife, probably because Lawrence had received more than all her children together, felt by the contrast that she and they were poor, indeed. They had plenty of land

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but little money, so they were "land poor," like most of the Virginia planters of their day.

The two half-brothers, being of age, came into possession of their estates at once. In June, two months after his father's death, Lawrence was married to Anne, the daughter of the Honorable William Fairfax, of "Belvoir," who, of course, brought to him more money and lands. Lawrence built an elegant mansion at Hunting Creek Place, and named it Mount Vernon, in honor of the admiral under whom he had served in the Spanish war.

Austin, the other half-brother, married Anne Aylett, a wealthy belle of Westmoreland, who added her income to "Wakefield," where they soon went to live.

Mary Washington was left with her five children at "Ferry Farm." While her husband lived she had felt that she had a share in all his estates and now she seemed to be quite poor by comparison. She began at once to make George, though he was only eleven, feel the responsibility of being her eldest son.

This, with his serious disposition and his father's dying injunction, made him feel deeply

George Washington

the necessity of providing for his own future, if not for the entire family.

His mother, haunted with the constant dread of poverty, could not help contrasting George's disadvantages with the advantages of his half-brothers. But George did not manifest the slightest degree of envy, as might have been expected. He had been devoted to his father, and for him to resent what had been so carefully planned for them all would be a grievous wrong to his father's memory.

If Captain Washington had lived long enough George might have been sent to William and Mary College, then fifty years old, and in age second only to Harvard in all America. It is doubtful if Augustine Washington intended to send George to Appleby School, where he and his eldest two sons had gone to complete their education. George, being a "younger son," would have to shift for himself, and could not expect to be fitted for the career of a Virginia "gentleman," like his much-admired brother Lawrence.

He consoled himself with the knowledge that if men's manners are "finished" in England, "so, too, were their virtues." He had doubtless

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seen agreeable young fellows wholly spoiled by being sent abroad to school. And to George's practical mind, "Mother Wit" would fit him "better than Mother Country" for getting on in the world.

Though George reconciled himself to this state of things, his mother did not. Her oldest boy was just as worthy of such privileges as any other mother's son, and to have him denied them made her discontented. She was a most capable woman, well fitted to manage the estate left to her care.

Because of the lack of schools in Virginia, she was not highly educated, though she was of a good Virginia family, because girls were not sent away to school like their brothers. Mary Washington was an admirable mother to George. From her he inherited the qualities that did most to make him the great man he became.

She brought him up strictly in accordance with the ideas of her time. Her children were thoroughly instructed in the catechism of the Church of England, and were taken regularly to Church. Sunday afternoons she often read to them from Matthew Hale's "Commentaries,

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Moral and Divine," to which she added commentaries of her own, on their conduct.

George always retained a wholesome respect, which amounted almost to awe, for his mother. This formal reverence he never forgot, always beginning his letters to her with "Honored Madam," and signing himself, "Your dutiful son." Lawrence Washington, of Choptank, the Cousin "Lal" George was visiting when his father died, said of Mary Washington long afterward:

"I was often there with George, his playmate, schoolmate, and young man's companion. Of the mother I was ten times more afraid than of my own parents. She awed me in the midst of her kindness, for she was, indeed, truly kind.

"I have often been present with her sons, proper, tall fellows, too, and we were mute as mice; and even now, when time has whitened my locks, and I am the grandparent of a second generation, I could not behold that remarkable woman without feelings it is impossible to describe. Whoever has seen that awe-inspiring air and manner so character-

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istic of the Father of his Country, will remember the matron as she appeared when the presiding genius of her well-ordered household, commanding and being obeyed.”

The widow Washington used to ride about the plantation in a low carriage, instead of on horseback, as a man would have done, giving her orders and overseeing the work.

The story goes that she one day discovered that in one instance her agent had not followed her directions. When she took him to task for it he explained that he had found a better way to do it, and when he was about to show her his improvement, she sternly interrupted him with:

“And, pray, who gave you any exercise of judgment in the matter? I command you, sir; there is nothing left for you to do but to obey.”

GEORGE'S FONDNESS FOR HORSES

There seems to have been no school near “Ferry Farm” of a higher grade than “Hobby’s” field school, so George was left to his own devices for a while. He had his younger brothers and Betty to look after and to play



BREAKING A FIERY COLT.

George Washington

with. He felt the care of them more since his father died, but he was a great, growing boy, and as restless as such boys generally are.

Although he did not have the peculiar temptations of the city boy, the tendency to be idle and “good-for-nothing” is always strong, no matter where a lad lives.

There were plenty of men, laborers, and slaves on the plantation. Sailors often visited the wharf on the estate and spun yarns of pirates and sea adventures, while taking on a cargo of tobacco. Of course, George enjoyed the outdoor life, making friends of dogs and horses —especially the horses, for which he manifested a great fondness all through life.

Then he ran, jumped, wrestled, pitched quoits, tossed iron bars, swam, fished, hunted, as healthy, energetic country boys have done in all ages of the world. No doubt he went coon hunting many a night, and had the great delight of roasting ears of corn, which has always been a favorite sport in Virginia.

But George’s chief passion was for horses. He liked nothing better than to be astride a fractious animal and keep his seat in spite of all its efforts to throw him. To control a horse gave

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him the keenest pleasure, the sense of mastery.

There was a dealer in blood horses at Alexandria who offered to make the boy a present of a certain fiery colt if he could ride it to Mount Vernon and back without losing his seat. The lad mounted the animal and started off. In due time he rode back in triumph. But when the dealer told George the horse was his, George laughed and shook his head, saying he had not earned it, for he had been thrown once, and dragged on the ground, too, but he did not lose his hold on the reins.

The following incident, described by Washington's adopted son, George Washington Parke Custis, was said to have occurred about this time. It reads like an imitation of the familiar story of young Alexander taming a fiery steed, to which is added a "hatchet-and-cherry-tree" moral:

HOW HE "BROKE" THE SORREL COLT

"We shall present our readers with one anecdote of no ordinary interest and character. The blooded horse was the Virginian favorite in those days as well as these. Washington's mother,

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fond of the animal to which her husband had been tenderly attached, had preserved the race in its greatest purity, and, at the time of our story, possessed several horses of superior promise.

“One there was, a sorrel, destined to be as famous (and for much better reason) as the horse which the brutal emperor raised to the dignity of consul. This sorrel was of a fierce and ungovernable nature, and resisted all attempts to subject him to the rein. He had reached his fullest size and vigor unconscious of a rider; he ranged free in the air, which he snuffed in triumph, tossing his mane to the winds, and spurning the earth in the pride of his freedom. It was a matter of common remark that a man would never be found hardy enough to back [mount] and ride this vicious horse. Several had essayed, but, deterred by the fury of the animal, they had desisted from their attempts, and the steed remained unbroken.

“The young Washington proposed to his companions that if they would assist him in confining the steed so that a bridle could be placed in his mouth, he

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would engage to tame the terror of the parish.

“Accordingly, early the ensuing morning, the associates decoyed the horse into an enclosure where they secured him and forced a bit into his mouth. Bold, vigorous, and young, the daring youth sprang to the unenvied seat, and bidding his comrades remove their tackle the indignant courser rushed to the plain.

“As if disdaining his burden, he at first attempted to fly, but soon felt the power of an arm which could have tamed his Arab grandsires in their wildest course on their native deserts. The struggle now became terrific to the beholders, who almost wished they had not joined in an enterprise so likely to be fatal to their daring associate.

“But the youthful hero, that ‘spirit-protected man,’ clung to the furious steed, till, centaur-like, he appeared to make part of the animal itself. Long was the conflict and the fears of his associates became more relieved as, with matchless skill, the rider preserved his seat, and with unyielding force controlled the courser’s rage, when the gallant horse, summoning all

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his powers to one mighty effort, reared and plunged with tremendous violence, burst his noble heart and died in an instant.

“The rider, ‘alive, unharmed and without a wound,’ was joined by the youthful group, and all gazed upon the generous steed, which, now prostrate, ‘trailed in the dust the honors of his mane,’ while from distended nostrils gushed in torrents the life-blood that a moment before had swollen in his veins.

“The first surprise was scarcely over, with a ‘What’s to be done? Who shall tell this tale?’ when the party were summoned to the morning’s meal. A conversation, most *mal a propos* to the youthful culprits, became introduced by the matron’s asking:

“‘Pray, young gentlemen, have you seen my blooded colts in your rambles? I hope they are well taken care of; my favorite, I am told, is as large as his sire.’

“Considerable embarrassment being observable, the lady repeated her question, when George replied:

“‘Your favorite, the sorrel, is dead, madam.’

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“ ‘Dead?’ exclaimed the lady, ‘Why, how has that happened?’

“ ‘That sorrel horse has been long considered ungovernable, and beyond the power of man to back or ride him; this morning, aided by my friends, we forced a bit into his mouth; I backed him, I rode him, and in a desperate struggle for the mastery, he fell under me and died upon the spot.’

“The hectic of a moment was observed to flush the matron’s cheek, but like a summer cloud it passed away, and all was serene and tranquil when she remarked:

“ ‘It is well; but while I regret the loss of my favorite, I rejoice in my son, who always speaks the truth.’ ”

CHAPTER IV

GOING TO LIVE AT AUGUSTINE’S

THE half-brothers soon saw that it would not do to let George run wild on “Ferry Farm.” He ought to be going to school—but where?

George Washington

There was nothing in that neighborhood higher or better than poor “Hobby’s” field school, and none at all near Mount Vernon, or Lawrence would have been glad to have the boy with him.

But there was a good school, for those days, taught by a Mr. Williams, at Oak Grove, only four miles from “Wakefield,” the farm on which George was born, and where Augustine, lately married, now resided. It was decided that George should live with Austin, as he was called in the family, and go to Mr. Williams’s school.

It was hard for the widowed mother to make up her mind to let George, her stay and reliance, go away from her for so long a time, but when she was convinced that it was necessary, that he might be able to earn a better living, she gave her consent. As he would be allowed to come home for his vacations, and over Sunday now and then, she made the best of it, as many a fond mother has had to do since then.

It is not likely that George himself was anxious to leave his mother and the younger children to go to school. Though he was but twelve years old he realized that he must make the sacrifice to better fit him for the support and

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care of the five children. His mother and sister and little brothers were half broken-hearted when he went away on horseback beside his brother, for an absence of years.

Augustine was a larger, heartier and stronger man than Captain Lawrence; he was more like their father, whose name he bore. He and his wife, already very fond of young George, did all in their power to make his long stay with them pleasant and helpful. Doubtless what the boy enjoyed most of all was the fine stable at "Wakefield," in which there were no less than thirty horses, many of them thoroughbreds. Of course, George had a horse for his own to ride to school, four miles and back, every week-day, and for an occasional gallop of twenty miles to visit his mother and the children at "Ferry Farm" over Sunday.

IN THE OAK GROVE SCHOOL

At Oak Grove School George took what would now be called the business course. He was always a poor speller, and weak in grammar, but strong in mathematics. Young as he was, he studied hard, although he was as fond of out-

George Washington

door games as any boy could be. Lewis Willis, a schoolmate, used to relate that while the rest "were playing at bandy and other games, he (George) was behind the door ciphering;" but that, on one occasion, the Washington boy was seen "romping with one of the largest girls; this was so unusual that it excited no little comment among the other lads"—for George, at this age, was overgrown, awkward, and shy.

Bashful he may have been with the girls, but George Washington was at home with the boys, and several stories are told of his running foot races, and leaving them behind every time in a way that was discouraging to the rest. As at "Hobby's," he soon became a leader, and the other boys believed so firmly in his fairness that they sometimes appealed to him as umpire in their disputes, and were always willing to stand by his decisions.

Of all the branches taught in his school, land surveying seems to have been a favorite with Mr. Williams. He used to go out with a class of older boys, carrying the transit, pole and chain, measuring the land along the river.

From the first George was interested in surveying. Of course, he liked any study that

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would keep him out of doors. Before he was far enough along in mathematics to understand the science, the teacher allowed him to carry the measuring chain or set up the pole to be sighted through the transit by the surveyor. By the time George had advanced so far as to understand the theory of mathematics he had acquired the necessary knowledge of the field work connected with surveying.

It was fortunate that the lad had discovered, so early in life, how much he liked surveying. It is important for a youth to find out as soon as he is able what study he wishes to pursue through life, for he is almost sure to do well what he likes to do, and to do anything well is to be on the high road to success.

Within a few years George had an opportunity to apply the knowledge gained in Mr. Williams's school. It paid him very well, indeed, as long as he needed to work for a living, and it was afterward a means of opening the way for his wonderful career.

When the Door of Opportunity opened George Washington walked right in, but he had a great deal to do with opening that door himself. As the boy "Abe" Lincoln said about be-

George Washington

ing President while he was only a farm hand: "Oh, I'll study and get ready, and then the chance will come," so George Washington also studied and got ready, and when the opportunity came he made it more than mere chance.

"THE YOUNG MAN'S COMPANION"

When George was ten years old he owned a kind of hand-book designed to teach many things learned in the schools and colleges. The title of this book was "The Young Man's Companion: or, Arithmetick Made Easy."

Across the top of its title-page was written, in a cramped, boyish hand, "George Washington, 1742."

"The Young Man's Companion" was compiled by W. Mather, as stated on its quaint title-page, "in a plain and easy Style that a young Man may attain the same without a Tutor." It covered so many branches as to make it a fore-runner of the modern correspondence school, for the benefit of those who cannot go to school or college.

"The Young Man's Companion" claimed to show how to read, write, and figure. It was a

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“complete letter writer,” giving the proper forms for business letters, and the titles by which “persons of quality” should be addressed. It showed how to survey land, navigate the sea, and build houses. It gave recipes for making ink and cider, and prescriptions for many diseases and ailments. It was a cyclopedia for the pioneer and planter, and designed to take the place, in the backwoods, of the lawyer, the doctor, and the schoolmaster, for America was nearly all backwoods in those days.

It would be easier to tell what the “Young Man’s Companion” did *not* contain than to enumerate all the branches it pretended to teach. George must have taken this compendium to Oak Grove, for it is full of rules, tables, and land measurements acquired in school.

On the blank pages provided for the purpose he wrote in his neat, flowing hand, forms of notes, deeds, wills and other legal documents. In it were also copies of his letters, drafts of crude poetry, boyish caricatures of his schoolmates, and even, with many a scrawl and a flourish, strange-looking birds that never flew o’er sea or land.

“The Young Man’s Companion” also “speaks

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volumes" about the boy and young man to whom it belonged, for nearly all that is known of the youth of Washington is found in that old book, from the day when the ten-year-old boy wrote his name in it to the record he made of his readings and other data after he had become a stately, dignified young man. It shows how he got into a habit which does much toward bringing success in life—the habit of "putting things down."

GOING TO SCHOOL IN FREDERICKSBURG

About two years after George was again living at "Ferry Farm," and going across the river to a select high school kept by the Rev. James Marye, rector of St. George's Church, in Fredericksburg.

As he could not have learned all that Mr. Williams could teach him, for he was not a brilliant student, it is likely that his mother could bear the separation no longer, and George had come home on her account.

The good rector's school was not at all to his taste. Instead of higher mathematics and surveying, Mr. Marye taught French, Latin, and

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deportment. Washington had occasion several times in his eventful career to regret that he did not learn French at this school, for the master, being a French Huguenot, could have given him excellent instruction in that language. George did not like to study languages.

Washington often referred with regret, while he was President, to his shortcomings in this branch of learning.

He had to work slowly and painfully, when an old man, to make up some of the deficiencies he might have overcome in half the time while in school. As genius is the ability to take pains, President Washington's letters and state papers became famous for their clear, forcible, and elegant language. Of course, some of this may have been due to the efficiency of his secretaries, but he had to acquire, in the presidential mansion, much that he might have learned at St. George's rectory.

It was because he expected to lead the life of a planter and not a Virginia "gentleman" like Captain Lawrence, that he thought little of the accomplishments. Being of a practical turn, he clung to the idea of being a surveyor, little thinking that, useful as his knowledge of sur-

George Washington

veying proved to be, the rules of civility were to be of far greater importance to him.

He boarded part of the time with a widow in Fredericksburg, whose sons, great, strapping fellows, proved to be his equal, if not superior, in wrestling and other feats of physical strength.

Many years afterward one of them became a captain in General Washington's army.

George must have learned a little Latin with Mr. Marye, for, on a fly-leaf in Patrick's Latin translation of Homer, are written, in the boy's plain, round hand, the following lines:

Hunc mihi quæso (bone vir) libellum
Redde si forsan tenues repertum
Ut scias qui sum sine fraude scriptum
Est mihi nomen,

GEORGIO WASHINGTON,
GEORGE WASHINGTON,
Fredericksburg,
Virginia.

“THE RULES OF CIVILITY”

As a part of his education as a Virginia gentleman of the old school, the Rev. Mr. Marye gave George to copy and learn by heart more

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than one hundred “Rules of Civility and Decent Behaviour in Company and Conversation.”

These queer directions are preserved just as the Washington boy wrote them, yellowed by time, and some of them nibbled by mice. It used to be stated, in all seriousness, that George Washington made up these rules himself. That would have been in keeping with the prevailing ideas of him. But it has recently been discovered that they were first published in French, and afterward translated for English and American use long before George went to school in Fredericksburg.

Here are a dozen of them, with all the schoolboy’s mistakes in spelling and capitalization, which were not so exact even then, in books, as they are now:

“Every Action done in Company
ought to be with Some Sign of Respect
to those that are Present.”

“If you Cough, Sneeze, Sigh or
Yawn, do it not Loud, but Privately;
and Speak not in your Yawning, but
put your handkerchief or Hand before
your face and turn aside.”

“When you Sit down, Keep your

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Feet firm and Even, without putting one on the other or Crossing them.”

“Keep your Nails clean and Short, also your Hands and Teeth Clean yet without shewing any great Concern for them.”

“Read no Letters, Books or Papers in Company but when there is a necessity for the doing of it you must ask leave: come not near the Books or Writing of Another so as to read them unless desired or give your opinions of them unask’d also look not nigh when another is writing a Letter.”

“Let your Discourse with Men of Business be Short and Comprehensive.”

“Mock not nor Jest of anything of Importance; break no Jests that are Sharp Biting, and if you deliver anything witty and pleasant abstain from Laughing thereat yourself.”

“Strive not with your Superiors in argument, but always Submit your Judgment with Modesty.”

“Undertake not what you cannot Perform but be Careful to keep your Promise.”

“Speak not Evil of the absent for it is unjust.”

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“Let your Recreations be Manfull
not Sinfull.”

“Labour to keep alive in your Breast
that Little Spark of Celestial fire called
Conscience.”

A BITTER DISAPPOINTMENT

It was during this restless period that George, looking into the future by the light of a boyish wish, began to long for “a life of the ocean wave.”

The farm, which was to be his at twenty-one, would scarcely support his mother’s family, and even his older brothers did not favor his becoming a licensed surveyor. A less faithful boy of fifteen would have run away, hoping to appease his family after making a fortune and his mark in the world. George, with all the confidence of boyhood, had not a doubt that he would be able to do both. Fame and fortune seemed easier to win in those days when the country, too, was young, and everything seemed to be waiting for the man who was brave enough to fight for it.

His oldest brother also began to think that if George could enter the navy it would be a good way out of a double difficulty, by taking care of

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the lad himself and leaving "Ferry Farm" for the use of the rest of his mother's family. It must have been about this time that the breaking of the sorrel colt occurred, though described as having happened earlier by Washington's adopted son. George's mother had lived in constant fear of his recklessness with horses, and his older brothers were sometimes afraid the boy would break his neck while breaking colts to ride. In the navy his leading and daring spirit would be turned to splendid account, and be sure of winning its reward.

No doubt Mary Washington was reminded of the dangers which beset her venturesome son at "Ferry Farm" when they suggested to her that it would be well to try to secure a place for him as midshipman. Beside her terror lest something should happen to her eldest son, she had a haunting dread of poverty.

Lawrence put it well before her that George, by going to sea, might make a place for himself in the world, and leave the farm and other property for her and the other children. This appealed to her as a sensible thing, and she gave her consent to the plan.

The brothers must have been surprised when

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the mother consented so readily, for only a short time before, she had felt that she could no longer bear to let the boy board at his brother's and go to school only twenty miles away—and now she had expressed her willingness to let him go to sea for life! Greatly elated, they hurried back to Mount Vernon to make the necessary arrangements. It would take at least six months to hear from the Admiralty, or Navy Department, in England. Lawrence had only to let Admiral Vernon know that he wished a midshipman's berth for his younger brother, and he felt sure that it could be arranged, for the admiral had kept up his friendship for the gallant young captain after health and duty compelled him to retire from the service of the king. It was in honor of their friendship that Lawrence had named his slighty estate "Mount Vernon."

But Widow Washington's heart could not follow her head—for she was a better mother than business woman. After George and Lawrence had gone to Mount Vernon she thought it all over. She was astonished at herself for yielding to George's earnest appeal, so ably supported by the older brother's arguments. She could not bear the thought of George's going away for

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life, yet she was too proud-spirited to take back her word. How could she keep him from going without forfeiting her self-respect? She had no one to help her; for every one seemed to be in league with Lawrence and against her.

At last the anxious mother thought of her brother, a lawyer in London, and wrote to him, without mentioning Admiral Vernon's friendship for Lawrence. It may be that her brother did not know that her husband had been a shipmaster, as one of many business enterprises. Mary Washington was not an expert letter writer, but she doted on her son George. She was most desirous that her brother should advise as emphatically as possible against a sea life for George, and she was afraid, no doubt, that he would not write as she wished if he knew the whole story.

After sending her letter to London she had to wait many weary months for a reply, uncertain whether it would be a help to her when received.

Meanwhile the midshipman's warrant came promptly, and to intensify the excitement and anxiety, a man-of-war anchored in the Potomac just below Mount Vernon. The mother, watch-

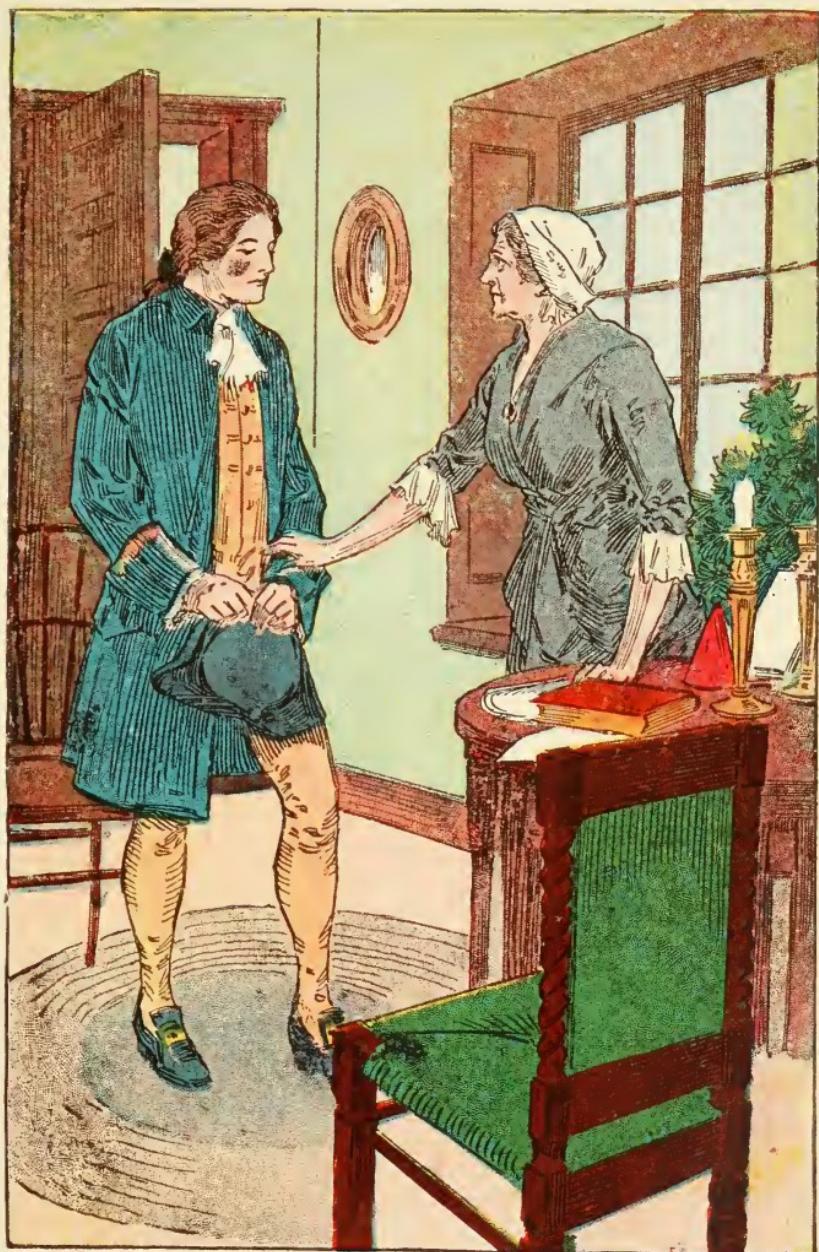
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ing and waiting at "Ferry Farm," thirty miles away, became nearly frantic lest her boy should be carried away before her helpless eyes.

A friend and neighbor, who seems to have been requested to report what was going on in the house beside the Rappahannock, wrote from Fredericksburg to Lawrence:

"I am afraid Mrs. Washington will not keep up to her first resolution. She seems to dislike George's going to sea, and says several persons have told her it was a bad scheme. She offers several trifling objections, such as a fond, unthinking mother habitually suggests, and I find that one word against his going has more weight than ten for it."

At last George was ready to go. They received word that the warship was about to sail. The "middy" uniform had come, and his little sailor chest was packed and hurried on board. His calm, but radiant happiness added to the mother's agony. Just at this juncture the long-looked-for letter came from Uncle Joseph. It was dated "Stratford-by-Bow, 19th May, 1747," and ran as follows:



YOUNG WASHINGTON AND HIS MOTHER.

George Washington

“I understand that you are advised and have some thoughts of putting your son George to sea. I think he had better be put apprentice to a tinker, for a common sailor before the mast has by no means the liberty of the subject: for they will press him from ship to ship, where he has fifty shillings a month, and make him take twenty-three, and cut and slash and use him like a negro, or rather like a dog.

“And as to any considerable preferment in the navy, it is not to be expected, as there are always so many gaping for it here who have interest [influence] and he has none. And if he should get to be master of a Virginia ship (which it is very difficult to do) a planter who has three or four hundred acres and three or four slaves, if he be industrious, may live more comfortably and leave his family in better bread than such a master of a ship can. . . .

“He must not be too hasty to be rich, but go on gently and with patience, as things will naturally go. This method, without aiming to be a fine gentleman before his time, will carry a man more comfortably and surely through the world than going to sea, unless it be a

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great chance indeed. I pray God keep you and yours.

“Your loving brother,

“JOSEPH BALL.”

This was just the kind of advice the sister had hoped her brother would send. She drove at once to Mount Vernon and laid the letter before the two sons. She now had a lawyer and a man of the world on her side. Her brother's counsel was good so far as he knew the family's affairs. What he wrote about the life of a sailor before the mast was all too true—but the boy was not to ship as a common sailor.

To George and Lawrence the letter seemed smart and unfair. The remarks about apprenticesing his sister's son to a tinker, because her family was without influence, sounded like a sneer, and the advice to the boy not to try to be a “fine gentleman” would have been downright insulting if that uncle had known George.

Though the letter had been written as if prompted by hearsay (as if a rumor of the boy's going to sea had reached him in London), they suspected that it had been penned at the

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mother's request, but George maintained a respectful silence on that point.

Seeing that the letter had overshot the mark, the poor mother-heart gave way after its long, tense struggle, and the stern, proud woman broke down. With tears of anguish she implored George not to add to the grief and loneliness of her widowhood by forsaking her now.

That settled it—for his mother's sake—not because of his uncle's meddling letter—George Washington gave up what he believed to be his only hope for the future. He did this so manfully that, in spite of his annoyance at having their plans so unjustly thwarted, Lawrence did all he could to comfort his young brother.

The midshipman's chest was quickly brought back from the battleship, and the bright new uniform was folded away, never to be worn again.

That man-of-war weighed anchor and sailed out to sea without a certain lad who, with a breaking heart, beheld his own radiant future vanishing with it. It left George Washington to a life as gloomy and dismal as only a disappointed boy's future can look—for reasons which their friend maintained were "trifling

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objections, such as a fond, unthinking mother habitually suggests."

It was a noble sacrifice, the crushing of his own heart to save his mother's. She must have referred to such memories as this when, at the height of his brilliant career, she said of her son, "George has always been a good boy, and I am sure he will do his duty."

That was the true knighting of a hero.

CHAPTER V

THE FAIRFAX FAMILY

AFTER his giving up going to sea Mary Washington allowed George to spend most of his time at Mount Vernon, where Lawrence engaged several tutors that the lad might keep on with the studies he liked. Although he did not wish George to become a professional surveyor, as that would not be considered as respectable as the life of a planter, he allowed him to drown his disappointment, as far as possible, by studying

George Washington

under the direction of James Genn, the licensed surveyor of Westmoreland County.

George's practical progress in this line is shown in several plots and drawings, still preserved, of actual surveys on the Mount Vernon estate made when he was only fifteen years of age.

About this time George made the following entry in his expense account:

“To cash pd y^e Musick Master
for my Entrance.....3/9”

This music teacher could not have been a private tutor, or Lawrence would have paid the fee, as it would have amounted to a great deal more than 3 shillings and 9 pence. As Washington never showed special ability in music, it is likely that he entered the neighborhood singing school for the fun of it. He probably sat there evening after evening, listening to “y^e Musick Master” talk about quavers and semiquavers, wishing all the while that he only dared to ask one young lady if he might ride home with her. Even then he would rather face a loaded cannon than one little “battery of bright eyes!”

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After he became famous some one started the story that Washington was a skillful flute player (as President Jefferson was an expert violinist), but it was not true, for he was never a performer on any musical instrument.

Four miles below Mount Vernon was "Belvoir," one of the most elegant estates in all Virginia, commanding a fine view of the Potomac. It had been the home of Anne Fairfax, now Mrs. Lawrence Washington. The Hon. William Fairfax, the proprietor of "Belvoir," was a courtly English gentleman. He had been governor of the island of New Providence, one of the West Indies, and a collector of customs in New England.

Wealthy, cultivated, and hospitable, the Fairfaxes were as popular as any of the "First Families of Virginia." The Lees, the Masons, the Byrds, the Carys, and others came often to visit them, and they sometimes entertained distinguished guests from "home," as England was called. Lawrence Washington, by his marriage to their daughter, was now a member of the Fairfax family. There was a son, George Fairfax, several years older than George Washington. Between these two Georges a friendship

George Washington

sprang up which lasted through life, even after they were widely separated in opinions and patriotism. George Fairfax soon married one of the Miss Carys and long afterward went to live in England to avoid the War of the Revolution.

It was on an autumn day, bright and clear, that George saw, for the first time, a certain elderly gentleman riding enthusiastically after the dogs in a grand fox-hunt. He was tall and thin, with a ruddy face, and bent forward over the pommel of his saddle with the intense, eager expression which near-sighted people often have. He wore a green hunting-jacket, buckskin riding-breeches, and top-boots. His gray hair was waving in the wind from under his black velvet cap.

After the hunting party had dashed past with a great hue and cry, George asked the name of the distinguished stranger. He was told, what he had already inferred, that it was Thomas, the sixth Earl of Fairfax, descended from the famous Fairfax in Cromwell's army, cousin of the owner of "Belvoir," and proprietor of an immense tract of land in Virginia, covering about one-fifth of the present State. The Earl of

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Fairfax was the first “real lord” George Washington ever saw.

When he was introduced to his lordship, the old nobleman sympathized with the boy in his shyness. Although he himself was in his sixtieth year, a graduate of Oxford, a member of the fashionable set in London society, a friend of Addison and other great English authors, and had even written for *The Spectator*, that literary magazine of the age, Lord Fairfax had never been able to conquer his own diffidence before strangers.

Indeed, it was because he was weary of London life and society that he had come to visit his cousin and to seek “a lodge in some vast wilderness” on his own estate. As soon as he could he built a hunting lodge, which he called “Greenway Court,” in the lovely Shenandoah Valley.

From the very first, Lord Fairfax took an interest in young George. It was not long before the lad was invited to join in a fox hunt. Being a daring and skillful rider, he enjoyed the sport immensely. This made another bond of sympathy, and the earl and the Washington boy were often seen riding across country together, sometimes pell-mell, in an exciting chase, and

George Washington

sometimes returning leisurely, side by side, along the road to "Belvoir." The neighbors began to smile and wonder what the great English lord could see in a big, awkward fellow like the Widow Washington's son. "There go sixteen and sixty again," they would say, "racing and chasing, and trying to break their precious necks!"

George was already glad that he had been obliged to write down all those "Rules of Civility" at Mr. Marye's, for he had occasion to practise many of them while in the company of this English "gentleman of the old school." But he had the kindness of heart, which is the foundation of true politeness. He was never "forward," and he was incapable of taking advantage of his lordship's friendship. When the earl asked questions and seemed to wish it, George talked as well as he could; when his elderly comrade was disposed to talk, the lad listened defferentially—but the two often rode many a mile together without either of them uttering a word.

The lord and the lad soon became the best of friends. You can tell what a man or a boy really is while at play—even better than while work-

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ing with him. He is thrown off his guard during the excitement of the game, and reveals his real self.

If he is selfish, overbearing, mean or tricky, he is sure to betray it without knowing. If he is modest, honest, fair and square, he lets you see that just as unconsciously. There is a kind of undress, or throwing off restraint in most sports that shows out the underlying character.

Therefore, the old earl, keen, observing, experienced, looked young George through and through while they were out hunting together. He saw that the boy's politeness was not a mere "polish" or "veneer," but that he was sound all the way through to his heart of oak. Any one could easily see that George was a heroic horseman and true sportsman, but the nobleman saw much beneath the surface that made him say to himself, "I like that lad!"

Lord Fairfax was a silent man in company, and often moody and morose, staying in his room a great deal of the time. The family felt sorry for him, for they knew he had suffered a deep disappointment which had made him turn against society in general. He began to invite George into his den where he smoked and talked

George Washington

about books and the affairs of the world. He could converse freely enough when alone with his young friend, and his advice and example proved a most valuable part of George's preparation for his great future.

The English nobleman did not agree with the Washington brothers that a poor Virginia planter was more respectable than a good surveyor, and he encouraged the youth, in a very practical way, to keep on with his work with Mr. Genn.

He suggested the best books to read and, being an accomplished writer, showed George how to express himself on paper, in a simple, direct and dignified manner. In this way Lord Fairfax did more toward the education of Washington than any of the boy's teachers.

The other members of the Fairfax family were quite as fond of George as their lordly relative seemed to be. Anne, Lawrence's wife, was almost as devoted to him as Lawrence himself. Hospitable "Belvoir" was the fourth home that George had thrown open to him—besides his mother's, Austin's, and Mount Vernon—all which argued well for that youth's sterling character and agreeable disposition.

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In the last year of his life, after he had been President when “Belvoir” had been burned down, and his friend George Fairfax had been dead a dozen years, the aged Washington wrote to Mrs. George Fairfax, one of the Miss Carys of his boyhood days, telling her of some of the great events of his later life, and closed his letter with these words:

“None of these events, nor all of them put together, have been able to eradicate from my mind the recollection of those happy moments—the happiest of my life—which I have enjoyed in your company at ‘Belvoir.’ ”

GEORGE TRIES TO WRITE POETRY

George’s shyness in the presence of ladies did not keep him from thinking he was in love with several of them. It was the fashion, then, for young men to profess to be distracted and to talk to their friends about their great love for certain fair ones, whom they called their “Dulcineas” or “Fidelias”

Instead of putting on their armor and riding forth to do deeds of valor for their lady loves, as did the knights of old, they sighed at home and tried to write poetry about their overpow-

George Washington

ering devotion. Of course, George showed some of the symptoms of the love-disease which seemed to have attacked many of the older youth. He wrote to his cousin, "Robin":

"My place of residence is at present at his lordship's where I might, was my heart disengag'd, pass the time very pleasantly as there's a very agreeable young lady lives in the same house (Colo. George Fairfax's Wife's Sister) but, as that's only adding fuel to fire, it makes me the more uneasy, for by often and unavoidably being in company with her revives my former passion for your Lowland Beauty, whereas was I to live more retired from young women, I might in some measure alleviate my sorrows by burying that chaste and troublesome passion in the grave of oblivion, and an eternal forgetfulness"—

and so on!

George finally tells his friend that if he should make known his love to the lady herself he would "only get a denial which would be only adding grief to uneasiness."

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George seems never to have mentioned who the “lowland beauty” was. Various young ladies have been pointed out as the boy’s mysterious charmer, but they are merely guesses. There is a tradition that she was a belle of Westmoreland County, not far from the Oak Grove School. If so, that may have been the reason he was called home from Austin’s before he was through Mr. Williams’s instruction. A boy of fourteen was entirely too young to be mooning over “lowland beauties” instead of his lessons.

It is believed by many that this girl was a Miss Lucy Grymes, who was afterward married to George’s friend, Richard Henry Lee, the “Dickey” to whom he wrote about the elephant and whip-top before he was ten. If so, she became the mother of “Light Horse Harry” Lee, a gallant young officer in the Revolution, who was the father of General Robert E. Lee.

Among other symptoms of the boyish ailment, George took to writing what he called poetry, which he copied into “The Young Man’s Companion.” It proves that the Washington boy was not a poetic genius. After he grew to be a man he really fell in love. Then he did not write verses about the lady, nor tell everybody his sub-

George Washington

lime heartache. He was content to inform the lady herself what he thought of her, in plain, sober prose. This evidently pleased her better than the following crude and laborious love-lines, found written in among his arithmetic tables and cash accounts, could ever have done:

“Oh ye gods! why should my poor
restless heart
Stand to oppose thy might and
Power?
At last surrender to Cupid’s feather’d
dart
And now lies bleeding every hour
For her that’s pitiless of my grief and
woes
And will not on me Pity take;
He sleeps amongst my most inveterate
foes
And with gladness never wish to
to wake, etc.”

George doubtless thought he knew the meaning of all this! It shows, at least, his restless, though not unhappy, state of mind. He must have copied and patched parts of it together with some one’s help, for it is spelled more correctly than most of his writing at this age.

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There were, apparently, other "beauties" to whom he thought it worth while to dedicate different lines, but filled with the same allusions to "Cupid's darts" and "love's pains." The following is an acrostic in which the first letter of each line, read downward, spells the lady's name, "F-R-A-N-C-E-S A-L-E-X-A"—which may have been meant for a Miss Alexander, who lived not far from Mount Vernon.

It is not known whether he ever finished this, for the next leaf in his memorandum book is missing. Poor George seems to have had double difficulties, with the initials at one end of the lines and the rhymes at the other:

"**F**rom your bright sparkling eyes I was
 undone;
Rays, you have; more transparent than
 the sun,
Amidst its glory in the rising day
None can you equal in your bright
 array;
Constant in your calm and unspotted
 mind;
Equal to all, but will to none prove
 kind,
So knowing, seldom one so young,
 you'll find.

George Washington

Ah! woe's me, that I should love and conceal
Long have I wish'd, but never dare reveal,
Even though severely love's pains I feel;
Xerxes that great wasn't free from Cupid's dart,
And all the greatest heroes, felt the smart."

CHAPTER VI

GEORGE'S FIRST SURVEY AND JOURNAL

GEORGE made such progress that Lord Fairfax proposed to send him over the Blue Ridge Mountains with Mr. Genn, the licensed surveyor, and his chum, George Fairfax, then a young man of twenty-two, to begin a systematic survey of his vast estates.

This proposal naturally roused the mother's opposition, for it would mean a longer separation than she liked, and send her boy among many dangers, from the savages and the "squat-

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ters" (settlers) on his lordship's land, who would regard a survey as a menace from the foreign owner of the homes which they called their own. Also, the rivers would be swollen in the early spring, and the forests abounded in wild beasts and rattlesnakes.

But George's eagerness, backed by the nobleman's influence, combined with the fact that the youth would begin at once to earn his living, seems to have won the consent of the family. The brothers, and Virginians in general, clung to the old English notion that working for pay, no matter how necessary or how liberal, was almost a disgrace to a "gentleman."

But George took great satisfaction in his ability to do work that was worth a good price. It gave him the feeling that he was good for something, and a pleasant sense of self-reliance and independence. He would enjoy conquering the obstacles of the surveyor—rivers, rattlesnakes, Indians, surly settlers and all—just as he had found satisfaction in mastering untamed colts.

He thought it would be rare fun to go on such an adventure into the new country with "the other George," and he would be glad indeed to

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work for and to show his gratitude to the Earl of Fairfax.

Besides, his instructor, Surveyor Genn, would go with the two youths to direct the expedition, which would consist also of several chainmen and polemen, or pilots and servants. They were all going on horseback, camping out when necessary, shooting game, and cooking their own meals. What his mother and brothers considered a hazardous undertaking looked to George, in his boyish enthusiasm, like a pleasure excursion.

The expedition seemed so important to George that he began his first diary as a record of it. This journal has been preserved, showing every line as the busy boy wrote it down while "roughing it," little thinking that millions of people would read it with deep interest for at least a hundred years. It is well that he did not know this, for he might have been afraid to write it, or if he did venture to jot down each day's doings, he would not have revealed his real self.

The young surveyors' line of march was over the mountains and down into the fertile valley of the river named by the Indians, Shen-an-do-ah, "The Daughter of the Stars," so called,

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perhaps, because the stars are reflected in some broad, tranquil expanses of that beautiful stream.

Here is about one-half of George's modest record of what was really a great adventure, beginning just four weeks after his sixteenth birthday, and lasting one day over a month. He made it into a little book and called it:

A JOURNAL OF MY JOURNEY OVER THE
MOUNTAINS, BEGAN FRIDAY, THE
11TH OF MARCH, 1747/8.

Friday, March 11, 1747/8. Began my journey in company with George Fairfax, Esq. We traveled this day 40 miles to Mr. George Neville's in Prince William County.

Saturday, March 12th. This morning Mr. James Genn, the surveyor, came to us. We traveled over the Blue Ridge to Capt. Ashby's on the Shenandoah River. Nothing remarkable happened.

Sunday, March 13th. Rode to his lordship's quarter. About 4 miles higher up the River Shenandoah we went through most beautiful groves of

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sugar trees, and spent the best part of the day in admiring the trees and the richness of the land. . . .

15th. Worked hard till night, and then returned. After supper we were lighted into a room, and I, not being so good a woodsman as the rest, stripped myself very orderly, and went into the bed, as they called it, when to my surprise I found it to be nothing but a little straw matted together without sheet or anything else, but only one threadbare blanket. . . . I was glad to get up and put on my clothes, and lie as my companions did.

Had we not been very tired, I am sure we should not have slept much that night. I made a promise to sleep so no more, choosing rather to sleep in the open air before a fire.

18th. We traveled to Thomas Berwick's on the Potomac, where we found the river exceedingly high, by reason of the great rains that had fallen in the Alleghanies. They told us it would not be fordable for several days, it being now six feet higher than usual, and rising.

We agreed to stay till Monday. We this day called to see the famed Warm

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Springs. We camped out in the field this night.

20th. Finding the river not much abated, we in the evening swam our horses over to the Maryland side.

21st. We went over in a canoe and traveled up the Maryland side all day, in a continued rain . . . about 40 miles from the place of starting in the morning, and over the worst road, I believe, that ever was trod by man or beast.

23d. Rained till about 2 o'clock and then cleared, when we were greatly surprised at the sight of more than thirty Indians coming from war with only one scalp. . . .

After clearing a large space and making a great fire in the middle, the Indian men seated themselves around it and the speaker made a grand speech, telling them in what manner they were to dance. After he had finished, the best dancer jumped up as one awaked from sleep, and ran and jumped about the ring in the most comical manner. He was followed by the rest.

They began their music which was performed with a pot half full of water and a deerskin stretched tight over it,

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and a gourd with some shot in it to rattle, and a piece of horse's tail tied to it to make it look fine.

One person kept rattling and another drumming all the while they were dancing. . . .

26th. Traveled up to Solomon Hedge's, Esquire, one of his majesty's justices of the peace in the County of Frederick, where we camped.

When we came to supper there was neither a knife on the table, nor a fork to eat with, but, as good luck would have it, we had knives of our own.

29th. This morning went out and surveyed five hundred acres of land. Shot two wild turkeys.

30th. Began our intended business of laying off lots.

April 2d. A blowing, rainy night. Our straw, upon which we were lying took fire, but I was luckily preserved by one of our men awaking when it was aflame. We have run off four lots this day.

4th. This morning Mr. Fairfax left us, with the intention of going down to the mouth of the river. We surveyed two lots, and were attended with a great company of people, men, women, and

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children, who followed us through the woods, showing their antic tricks. They seemed to be as ignorant a set of people as the Indians. They would never speak English, and when spoken to, they all spoke Dutch. This day our tent was blown down by the violence of the wind. . . .

7th. This morning one of our men killed a wild turkey that weighed twenty pounds. We surveyed fifteen hundred acres of land, and returned to Van Meter's about one o'clock.

I took my horse and went up to see Mr. Fairfax. We slept in Cassey's house, which was the first night I had slept in a house since we came to the Branch.

8th. We breakfasted at Cassey's, and rode down to Van Meter's to get our company together, which when we had accomplished, we rode down below the Trough to lay off lots there. . . .

We camped in the woods, and after we had pitched our tent, and made a large fire, we pulled out our knapsacks to recruit ourselves. Every one was his own cook. Our spits were forked sticks; our plates were large chips. As for dishes we had none.

George Washington

12th. Mr. Fairfax got safe home, and I to my brother's house at Mount Vernon, which concludes my journal.

This was a plain, matter-of-fact account, for a boy of sixteen, of a series of adventures that George had a right to brag about, but he was not that kind of a boy.

He recorded things against himself, his mis-haps and shortcomings as a woodsman or hunter, gravely writing down one night that he had shot at two wild turkeys and missed them both! There was at least one adventure he might have mentioned if he had not been too modest, but the story of it was afterward told by another member of the little expedition.

Mr. Genn, who during previous surveys had come to know many of the Indians, put the rest of the party on their guard against a burly chief, Big Bear, who was very vain of the strength of his hands, and took cruel delight in crushing the hand of an unwary white man, while shaking it, until the "paleface" cried out with the pain.

When Big Bear came and extended his treacherous hand to George to shake, that youth innocently seized it, and, by a trick he had

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learned, wrung it so that the astonished savage roared out, while the bystanders, both red and white, danced with delight to see that wily Indian caught in his own trap.

CHAPTER VII

A Boy No LONGER

THE first thing George Washington did on his return from his surveying trip beyond the Blue Ridge was to report to his employer, Lord Fairfax, who was still at "Belvoir." The earl was greatly pleased with the boy's diary and his further report of his work. As a great landed proprietor he was able to recommend George and secure other surveying for the lad to do, which sent him out into the wilderness again and again on expeditions of which he was sole surveyor and manager.

After Lord Fairfax's lodge, Greenway Court, was erected, it became a kind of resting place for George in the intervals of his work over the

George Washington

mountains. Here the old nobleman ordered a room always kept in readiness for his comrade. “George’s room connected with his lordship’s library, for the old gentleman made constant companions of his books during the many lonely years he lived in the valley of the Shenandoah.

The pages of George’s memorandum book, now yellow with age, show the taste and influence of the older man on his young friend’s reading in history and current literature.

Here and there in that most uncommon “commonplace book” are records, almost as short as the cash entries found on the same pages, such as “Read to the reign of King John;” and, “In *The Spectator*, read to 143;” then, as a sign of at least one friendly discussion, this query: “What’s the noblest passion of the mind?”

Also, as an evidence of his early acquired habit of “putting things down,” is the memorandum: “The regulator of my watch now is 4 m: and over the fifth from the slow end.”

In spite of the older companion’s attempts to lead George’s mind off his early love affairs—for Lord Fairfax was almost a “woman hater”—the lad still tried to write a love ditty now

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and then, until he must have become disgusted with his own sickly efforts.

His memorandum book also shows that he was beginning to care about his personal appearance, for he records that he carried with him seven caps, seven waistcoats and four neckcloths! This shows that he must have spent much of his time at Mount Vernon, "Belvoir," and the other hospitable homes where he always found a cordial welcome. He did not need all those waistcoats and neckcloths surveying among the Indians and Dutch squatters. While working in the wilderness he dressed very much as the Indians did, wearing moccasins, leggings, and the like.

There was the greatest contrast possible between George's life among savages and that he led when he "came out" into civilization. He made Mount Vernon his headquarters, but went as often as business and social engagements would permit, to visit his mother and the younger children.

As if to compel his young brother to follow in his own footsteps, Captain Lawrence employed two acquaintances of the Spanish War, who seem to have been hanging about the wealthy re-



YOUNG WASHINGTON REPORTS TO HIS EMPLOYER,
LORD FAIRFAX.

George Washington

tired officer's estate, to give George military instruction.

One of these was a wiry little Dutchman named Van Braam, who trained him in fencing and sword practice. The other, Adjutant Muse, taught general military tactics. Each of these men reappeared and cut a strange figure in George Washington's career a few years later.

There is something nobly sad in the yearning of Lawrence Washington over his youngest brother with the almost passionate unselfishness of a dying father. His lung trouble was constantly growing worse. Several children born to him and his wife had sickened and died. This, with his own failing health, must have convinced the proprietor of Mount Vernon that George would soon inherit it, and his other interests, as provided by their father's will and his own.

Lawrence had shown himself to be a man, in spite of his ill health, of great ability and lofty purposes. Brave, generous, cultivated, he stood high in the Virginia of his day; but when he saw that he would soon have to leave his beautiful, devoted wife; his fine estate; his delightful friends; and the great affairs in which he was deeply interested, he clung to George with

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strong affection and an inspiring hope that the youth would carry on the work he himself had longed so earnestly to do.

He was president of the council, or board of directors, of a syndicate known as the Ohio Company, organized for the purpose of settling and trading along the Ohio River.

For years this great company's operations had been hampered by the encroachments of the French, coming up from the lower Mississippi and down from Canada and the Great Lakes, bribing and instigating the Indians, everywhere they could, against the English. Reports kept coming in of French forts and settlements upon the Ohio Company's territory, and now and then a frontier family, or a whole settlement of English, was massacred by the Indians.

Christopher Gist, a surveyor, scout, guide, and prospector, was sent out by the company to make a survey of lands south of the Ohio, and bring in a report of the state of affairs in that part of the country.

Lawrence Washington seems to have been one of the few men in the American colonies who then foresaw that war was sure to come between the English and the French and Indians.

George Washington

Manly as George was, he was still too young to comprehend the hidden motive beneath all that his brother was doing for him, and Lawrence was too tender and sympathetic to let the dear boy know it yet.

So the youth entered into the festivities of the neighborhood with the same earnestness that he showed in his surveying. His diffidence still held him back.

An old lady, many years afterward, in speaking of these days of her youth and Washington's together, said: "I used to wish that he would talk more!"

George seems to have had little sympathy with the life of the young men of the surrounding families, as he grew to young manhood himself. His surveying and hunting with Lord Fairfax seemed to satisfy his craving for outdoor amusement. He seemed to practice unconsciously one of the quaint preachments dictated to him by Rector Marye, in his "*Rules of Behaviour*": "Let your recreations be manfull not sinfull."

The "*younger sons*" of the Virginia gentry, without either army or navy to enter, as there were in England, and without high aims in life, gave themselves over to drinking, gambling,

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carousing, horse jockeying, cock fighting and the like. Growing up in idleness among slaves, convicts, sailors, and adventurers, made many of them coarse, vulgar, and brutal in their tastes and habits. These worthless young men formed a low-lived class, but counted themselves among the Virginia "gentlemen" who at first looked down on George Washington because he was an independent, self-respecting, honorable, but wage-earning surveyor!

Little did young Washington care what such idle fellows thought of him or his work. He had come up with the same surroundings, but he had learned to work; he was happy in doing something worth while, and being well paid for it.

The surveys he made in those early days have stood the rigid tests of many generations. Some of his lines became important boundaries over which there were years of dispute in the Virginia courts of law.

This was not because he was a talented or brilliant youth, but because he went to work with all his might, faithfully, patiently, perseveringly running every line true while he was at it, without slighting or shirking any detail,

George Washington

however minute. His strict sense of honor made him as afraid of running a false line as of telling any other kind of a lie.

Honest, persistent industry was the only genius George Washington knew. But he learned all he could from anybody or anything that could teach him—even from the poor, despised Indian. He did not believe that saying of the settlers: “The only good Indian is a dead Indian.” He did not treat them as mere painted savages, but made friends among them—and the Indians “met him half way.”

They took pride in telling him the secrets of the forests and instructed him in their arts and crafts. They taught him to be a shrewd and skillful woodsman and he gained valuable knowledge of their wild life. He picked up all he could of their speech and learned their sign language.

They were glad to tell him who their friends and enemies were among the neighboring and more distant tribes—the Shawnees, Delawares, Susquehannas, and that great confederation known as the Five Nations.

When he came to a rushing stream which he dared not attempt to ford, they showed him how,

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by carrying a heavy stone, he could keep a firm footing while he waded across, shoulder deep, in safety.

And the Indians, in their simplicity, saw before even the white men realized it, that this big awkward youth was no common "paleface." George Washington acquired that which was very valuable in his private affairs. He observed "the lay of the land," the values of different soils, and of various kinds of standing timber when cut up into lumber. In this way he learned where to invest his money when he had money to invest.

All this knowledge became useful to him sooner than he had dreamed, and those gambling, grumbling young men began to wonder why a young fellow who appeared so ordinary could leave them far behind in the grand race of life.

They thought he must be inspired or exercised an uncanny influence over the Indians, but the art he used was the more marvelous magic of faithful, good-natured common sense. His wild life at this time is outlined in a letter he wrote from the woods to the friend he had addressed eight or nine years earlier as "Dickey":

George Washington

“DEAR RICHARD:

“The receipt of your kind favor of the 2d instant afforded me unspeakable pleasure, as it convinces me that I am still in the memory of so worthy a friend—a friendship I shall be ever proud of increasing. Yours gave me the more pleasure, as I received it among barbarians and an uncouth set of people.

“Since you received my letter of October last, I have not slept above three or four nights in a bed, but, after walking a good deal all day, I have lain down before the fire upon a little hay, straw, fodder, or a bearskin, whichever was to be had, with man, wife, and children, like dogs and cats; and happy is he who gets the berth nearest the fire!

“Nothing would make it pass off tolerably but a good reward. A doul-loon is my constant gain every day that the weather will permit of my going out, and sometimes six pistoles.

“The coldness of the weather will not permit of my making a long stay, as the lodging is rather too cold for the time of year. I have never had my clothes off, but have lain and slept in

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them, except the few nights I have been in Frederickstown.”

As a pistole was about \$4.00, George was earning \$5 a day and sometimes more than \$20 a day, which was very good pay for a boy of sixteen, when a dollar would buy much more, or “went farther” than a dollar will to-day.

This suggests the story of a witty senator who was visiting Mount Vernon, not many years ago, and being shown where Washington once stood and performed the almost impossible feat of throwing a silver dollar across the broad Potomac, he exclaimed:

“Yes, but you must remember *how much farther a dollar went in those days.*”

Some of the surveyors in old Virginia had brought their profession into discredit by accepting bribes to run certain lines at a very little out of true at the beginning, and making a difference of miles in the final survey. The land-owners and settlers among whom George Washington went about his work found that, over and above his industry and tact, he could not be bullied or bribed.

Lord Fairfax, well knowing this, and being

George Washington

mightily pleased with George's signal success, arranged to have the boy appointed the official surveyor of Culpeper County, which was a part of his own inheritance, and so named in honor of his mother.

But George's appointment was not a mere matter of influence, for he had to pass a rigid examination at William and Mary College, at Williamsburg, the Colonial capital, before receiving, when but seventeen, the following license, which he had a good right to look upon as a kind of ticket of admission from boyhood to young manhood:

"George Washington, Gent., produced a commission from the President and Master of William and Mary College, appointing him to be a Surveyor of this County, which was read, and thereupon he took the usual oaths to his Majesty's person and government, and took and subscribed to the abjuration oath and text, and took the oath of a surveyor according to law."

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CHAPTER VIII

YOUNG MAJOR WASHINGTON

THE ONLY TIME GEORGE EVER LEFT HIS NATIVE LAND

THE life of the seventeen-year-old County Surveyor went on as before. His pilgrimages into the wilderness were made at wider intervals, for his brother needed him more. Lawrence's failing health made it necessary for George to assume a general oversight of the great estate and its many interests, milling, fishing and manufacturing, besides the work on an ordinary farm or plantation.

His brother had been pleased with Lord Fairfax's attentions and was proud of George's success in surveying. More than that, the lad had shown that, while his family would gladly have made life easy and pleasant for him, he was determined to make his own way in the world. A boy may inherit property or have a fortune given to him, but he has to earn success. This is what George had shown a disposition to do, and

George Washington

no boy of seventeen, even of greater ability, ever achieved higher success than the Widow Washington's oldest son.

It is too often asserted that Washington's way was opened for him through life, but this was not true. He had to work hard and long to win his great success.

George, on his part, was beginning to see the motive of Lawrence's keeping him at Mount Vernon, and that the eldest brother's opposition to his surveying was not merely because it was not thought respectable. He saw that Lawrence's health was going from bad to worse, and he and Anne, the sick man's wife, persuaded him to try the already famous warm springs of Virginia.

Lawrence returned from the springs as weak and wan as he went, and the doctors advised him to take the ocean voyage to England. This did not benefit him. As a last resort he decided to spend the winter in Barbados.

Between the journeys in his vain search for health Lawrence was planning for the future of his little family, which consisted of his wife, and infant daughter. He resigned as an officer in the Colonial militia and recom-

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mended his younger brother for the vacancy.

Though George was but nineteen, he was chosen district Adjustant-General, with the rank of major, and a salary amounting to seven hundred and fifty dollars a year.

So, while he was continuing his broadsword practice with Van Braam and his military studies under Adjutant Muse, the young man had to make tours through several neighboring counties, inspecting drills, arms and accoutrements of the Colonial militia. These important excursions, in addition to his duties as manager at Mount Vernon, and his occasional expeditions into Culpeper County, as official surveyor, and farther over the Ridge, kept him very busy, indeed.

All his military and other duties had to give way to the closer obligations of a brother's affection, for Lawrence wanted only George to go with him on the voyage to the West Indies.

The Washington brothers sailed the 28th of September, 1751, for the little island of Barbados, the most easterly of the Lesser Antilles, which form the curved enclosure of the Caribbean Sea on the east. In these days of "ocean greyhounds" which cross the Atlantic in five

George Washington

days, or even less, it seems incredible that they were five weary weeks on their way to those out-lying islands.

George kept a record of this journey, the only one he ever made out of his own country. Even Barbados was not a foreign island, as it was then, as now, a British possession.

That little green island, surrounded by coral reefs, must have looked beautiful to the tired voyagers as they drew near, almost in sight of the northern shore line of South America, and entered the harbor at Bridgetown, its one city and its capital, for the island itself is only twenty miles long and fourteen wide. The following passages are from George's journal, beginning with their reception by Major Clark, the governor of the island, and describing the hospitalities tendered them during their short stay there:

Nov. 4, 1751. This morning received a card from Major Clark, welcoming us to Barbados; with an invitation to breakfast and dine with him. We went —myself with some reluctance, as the small-pox was in his family. We were received in the most kind and friendly manner by him. . . . After drinking

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tea were again invited to Mr. Carter's, and desired to make his house ours till we could provide lodgings agreeable to our wishes, which offer we accepted.

5th. Early this morning came Dr. Hilary, an eminent physician recommended by Major Clark, to pass his opinion on my brother's disorder, which he did in a favorable light, giving great assurance that it was not so fixed but that a cure might be effectually made.

In the cool of the evening we rode out, accompanied by Mr. Carter, to seek lodgings in the country, as the doctor advised, and were perfectly enraptured with the beautiful prospects which every side presented to our view—the fields of cane, corn, fruit trees, etc., in a delightful green. We returned without accomplishing our intentions.

7th. Dined with Major Clark, and by him was introduced to the Surveyor General and the Judges who likewise dined there. In the evening they complaisantly accompanied us in another excursion into the country to choose lodgings. We pitched on the house of Captain Croftan, commander of James's Fort. He was desired to come

George Washington

to town next day to propose his terms. We returned by the way of Needham's Fort.

8th. Came Captain Croftan with his proposals, which, though extravagantly dear, my brother was obliged to accept.

. . . In the evening we removed some of our things up and went ourselves. It is very pleasantly situated near the sea, and about a mile from town. The prospect is extensive by land and pleasant by sea, as we command a view of Carlisle Bay and the shipping.

9th. Received a card from Major Clark, inviting us to dine with him at Judge Maynard's to-morrow. He had a right to ask, being a member of a club called the "Beefsteak and Tripe," instituted by himself.

10th. We were genteely received by Judge Maynard and his lady, and agreeably entertained by the company.

. . . After dinner there was the greatest collection of fruit set on the table that I have yet seen—the granadilla, sapadilla, pomegranate, sweet orange, watermelon, forbidden fruit, apples, guavas, etc., etc.

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We received invitations from every gentleman there, . . . but above all the invitation of Mr. Maynard was most kind and friendly. He desired and even insisted, as well as his lady, on our coming to spend some weeks with him, and promised nothing should be wanting to render our stay agreeable.

My brother promised he would accept the invitation as soon as he should be a little disengaged from the doctors.

15th. Was treated with a ticket to see a play of "George Barnwell" acted. The character of Barnwell and several others were said to be well performed.

. . .

17th. Was strongly attacked with the small-pox. Sent for Dr. Lanahan, whose attendance was very constant till my recovery and going out, which was not till Thursday, the 12th of December.

December 12th. Went to town and called on Major Clark's family, who had kindly visited me in my illness, and contributed to me all they could in sending me the necessaries which the disorder required.

As George had been exposed to small-pox at

George Washington

their house on the day after their arrival, it seems but natural that the Clarks should have “kindly visited” their victim during his four weeks’ illness with “necessaries.”

Only two nights before he was prostrated he went to see the play “George Barnwell,” which was, for a hundred years, one of the most popular melodramas on the English stage—and exposed everybody there to small-pox!

But people were not so careful about contagious diseases, as in these days of disinfecting, fumigating, sterilizing, anti-toxins, and so on. They regarded such plagues as “dispensations of Providence,” instead of being the result of recklessness, and even criminal negligence, as they are known to be to-day.

George’s comment on the play was characteristic. Instead of recording, as he had a right to do, that the play was well rendered, or that he thought the acting was good, he modestly states that several of the characters “*were said to be* well performed!”

Lawrence did not improve in health as the physician had said he would. He must have accepted some invitations of hospitable families on the island for George’s sake. His reply that

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he would have the pleasures of further courtesies “as soon as he should be a little disengaged from the doctors,” was as plucky as it was polite.

With the feverish restlessness of a consumptive in the last stages of his affliction, Lawrence decided to go to Bermuda, which is as far north as North Carolina, and about two-thirds of the way home, to see if the cooler climate there would not benefit him. Yet he must have realized that he was “hoping against hope.”

He sent George back to Mount Vernon to bring Anne, his wife, to meet him in Bermuda. Here is a part of George’s record of his last day at Barbados.

December 22d. Took leave of my brother, Major Clark, and others, and embarked on board the *Industry* for Virginia. Weighed anchor and got out of Carlisle Bay about twelve o’clock.

This plain, unsentimental record of his experiences on that tropical island sounds tame after all these years. Of the six weeks he remained in Barbados nearly four of them were spent indoors with a loathsome disease which

George Washington

had been given him along with his welcome to the governor's house. His fresh, boyish complexion was left somewhat pitted, and he wore the marks of Major Clark's hospitality to his dying day.

Years afterward, when small-pox was epidemic in his army, General Washington expressed himself as glad not to be in danger of taking the "disorder," as a result of this youthful experience on the island of Barbados. Most youths of his age would have denounced those who had given them the disease, or would at least have murmured against their luck, with a careful record of the symptoms or disgusting details of their sickness, but George expressed no resentment, and referred only to the kindness of the Clarks to him in his tedious and tantalizing illness.

During his return voyage "the weather and wind" seemed to be the only "news of the day." It must have been a lonely, dreary Christmas and New Year's he spent tossing on the briny deep. It was February before he reached Mount Vernon with Lawrence's messages to his wife. Before they started for Bermuda they received a letter from the patient telling them not to come

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to him there. He had gone to the more northerly island in March and the cooler climate had aggravated his affliction so that he wrote to them to stay where they were, as he was “hurrying home to his grave.” He arrived at Mount Vernon in the spring and died in July, 1752, leaving a baby daughter, Sarah, heiress of his wealth. Two years later, she died, and, as Lawrence seems long to have expected, George Washington became master of Mount Vernon.

CHAPTER IX

THE OHIO COMPANY’S TROUBLES WITH THE FRENCH AND INDIANS

BY THE terms of Lawrence Washington’s will, George was appointed one of several men to see that all his wishes were carried out, besides being manager of the estate of Mount Vernon. As he understood his brother’s business better than any one else, he became acting executor, although he was not twenty-one. As he went about

George Washington

the sad business he saw, as he never could see before, how Lawrence had begun long ago to plan for them all, and, as so often happens, he began really to appreciate his brother's finer qualities after he had gone. Washington Irving, the historian, and one of the first and best of American authors, wrote of this elder brother:

“He was a noble-spirited, pure-minded, accomplished gentleman; honored by the public and beloved by his friends. The paternal care ever manifested by him for his youthful brother George, and the influence his own character and conduct must have had upon him in his ductile years, should link their memories together in history, and endear the name of Lawrence Washington to every American.”

Brother Augustine was also a member of the Ohio Company, and Lawrence's control of it, aside from the money they had invested in the enterprise, kept the Washingtons interested in its adventures. They were public spirited and would naturally have followed the fortunes of this colonization scheme for the sake of its bearing upon the future of the colony.

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Besides, their grant covered nearly the whole of what is now the State of West Virginia and southeastern Ohio, and became a part of the "bone of contention" over which France and England soon fought what was known as the "Seven Years' War."

Christopher Gist had reported that affairs along the Ohio were coming rapidly to a crisis. He had been instructed by the Ohio Company to return, build a fort, and lay out towns beyond the Ohio, which he began to do. The Ohio Company was to settle one hundred and fifty families in the territory granted to them by the king of England.

The English claimed the continent of North America by right of discovery. The Cabots and others had taken formal possession of all the country westward to the Pacific, thinking America was an island a few hundred miles wide. The only place a white man had ever crossed was at the Isthmus of Panama, and there it was but fifty miles wide. The French scouted such a claim. They had taken possession of the waterways, which were most important before the days of railroads. They had settled at the mouth of the Mississippi, had gone

George Washington

from the Great Lakes to the source of that stream, which was called by the Indians, "the Father of Waters," and had made settlements down through what are now known as Michigan, Wisconsin, Illinois, and Indiana, as the names of many cities, La Crosse, Eau Claire, Prairie du Chien, La Salle, Joliet, Terre Haute, Vincennes, and many others, still testify.

Lake Champlain, and other names in Northern New York show the enterprise of the French, whose missionaries were vigilant and whose traders formed closer friendships with the Indians than the English did, French pioneers often marrying Indian women.

The French started out to establish a chain of forts along the waterways from Lake Erie to New Orleans. They had a fort, Presque Isle, on Lake Erie, near the site of the present city of Erie, Pennsylvania. Only fifteen miles from this fort they built another, near the source of French Creek. Another at the village of Venango where this stream, also called the Venango River, flows into the Allegheny.

These are the first links in a long chain of forts which were to extend down the Ohio and the Mississippi, and control the water courses

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from Lake Erie to the Gulf of Mexico. They began establishing trading posts and stockades, and sending soldiers and settlers to cover this vast expanse of western country and to keep the English from extending their power beyond the Alleghenies.

The Indians, seeing that the English claimed their country from east to west by right of discovery, and the French from north to south by right of settlement, began to protest against this French encroachment, because the French were more enterprising and troublesome than the English.

The French had, by preaching and marrying into many of the northern tribes, made them their friends and allies. These sympathizers with the French were called "French Indians."

The Ohio tribes were angry with the French for trespassing on their land. They went and threatened the men at the forts, but the French only laughed at them. Then Tanacharisson, called the Half King, because he was not the highest in authority, but a kind of vice-president of a great confederation of tribes, complained at the French fort on Lake Erie. He made the following speech:

George Washington

“Fathers, you are the disturbers of the land by building towns and taking the country from us by fraud and force. We kindled a fire and held a council a long time ago at Montreal, where we asked you to stay and not to come and trespass on our land. I now warn you to return to that place, for this land is ours.

“If you had come in a peaceable manner, like our brothers, the English, we would have traded with you as we do with them; but you come and build houses on our land, and take it by force; that is what we cannot stand. Both you and the English are white.

“We live in a country between you both; the land belongs to neither of you. The Great Spirit gave it to us to live on. So, fathers, I ask you, as I have asked our brothers, the English, to withdraw, for I will keep you both at arm’s length.

“The one that pays most attention to this request, that is the side we will stand by and consider our friends. Our brothers, the English, have heard this, and I now come to tell it to you, for I am not afraid to order you off this land.”

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The French commandant felt safe and sure with the powerful tribes of “French Indians,” so he insulted the Half King by calling him a child, for the Indians venerated age, and it was a great compliment to any chief to be thought very old. He made this scornful reply:

“Child, you talk foolishly. You say this land belongs to you, there is not the black [paring] of my nail yours. It is my land, and I will have it, let who will stand up against me. I am not afraid of flies and mosquitoes, for as such I consider the Indians.

“I tell you that down the river I will go, and build upon it. If blocked up I have forces sufficient to burst it open and trample down all who oppose me. My men are as countless as the sands upon the seashore. Therefore, here is your wampum; I fling it at you.”

When Indians met in council to make any agreement, they presented the other party with a valuable belt of wampum, or Indian money, which they called a “speech belt.” It was a friendly act to accept it. To refuse it meant war, and to throw it back in an insulting way, as this

George Washington

French commander did, was a challenge to fight to the bitter end.

When the Ohio tribes, Delawares, Shawnees, and Mingoes, attempted to form an alliance with the Six Nations, the great Indian confederation living in what is now New York State, they sent a number of chiefs to invite the Six Nations to send chiefs to take part in a grand council at Logstown, on the Ohio, about fifteen miles from the junction of the Allegheny and Monongahela, to discuss a treaty with the Governor of Virginia. The haughty chieftains in New York declined to come, and sent back this sneering message:

“It is not our custom to meet to treat of affairs in the woods and weeds. If the Governor of Virginia desires to speak with us, and deliver us a present from our father [the king of England] we will meet him at Albany, where we will expect the Governor of New York will be present.”

After all these rebuffs the Half King felt obliged to make friends, on the part of the Ohio tribes, with the English. He saw that the In-

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dians would be the chief sufferers if the French and English came to blows over the lands on which the red men had been living for ages. He thought the English would do his tribes the least harm, so, as a choice of evils, he came to them for help. He looked upon the matter as did the old Delaware chief who came to Mr Gist in the Kanawha region and said sadly:

“Our ‘fathers,’ the French, claim all the land on one side of the Ohio, and our ‘brothers,’ the English, claim all the land on the other side—now where does the Indians’ land lie?”

The Ohio Company reported the state of affairs to Robert Dinwiddie, the grasping, obstinate, narrow-minded man who had been sent by the king of England to be Governor of Virginia. As the Governor himself was a member of the Ohio Company, he saw good reason for sending out a commissioner to warn the French trespassers off the premises claimed by the English. He appointed Captain William Trent for this mission, which might prove dangerous. Captain Trent set out for Logstown, the headquarters of the Ohio tribes, with presents of guns, powder,

George Washington

shot, and clothing to buy the good-will of the Indians. Instead of going to the place to which he had been sent, Trent marched off in another direction to a town at which Gist had been received in a friendly manner.

On arriving there he found that settlement had been attacked and burned, and that the English traders had either been killed or carried away prisoners, and the French flag was floating over the charred remains of what had been a flourishing trading post.

This was too much for timid Captain Trent. He went home as fast as he could go and reported to Governor Dinwiddie that the French Indians were already on the war path. Therefore, it was useless to warn the French off the premises when they were ready to fight to prove their own right to them.

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CHAPTER X

YOUNG WASHINGTON GOES ON A DANGEROUS ERRAND

MAJOR GEORGE WASHINGTON was busy as manager of the Mount Vernon estate, riding twelve to fifteen miles every day to superintendent all the work that was going on, besides his extra duties as chief executor of his brother's will. If any one had a good excuse for refusing to take outside work upon himself it was he, for surely he seemed to have his hands full.

So he must have been surprised when Governor Dinwiddie sent word that he was appointed commissioner or envoy to go on an important mission for the Colony. Of course, George had heard of Captain Trent's failure to give the French the Governor's "notice to quit" the English territory. If it was a dangerous errand when the captain went, it must be doubly perilous now. George's youth was against him,

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especially in dealing with the Indians. "Old men for counsel," was an Indian saying. Even the French officers would laugh in their sleeves at a boy ambassador.

But George had courage, tact, common sense, experience with and knowledge of the Indians' ways. The very obstacles that had alarmed Captain Trent fired his brave young soldier heart. He shared the family's public spirit, and was ready to do anything he could for his country at a moment's notice. So he consented to undertake the difficult and dangerous mission. It would have been a hard and risky journey through the pathless forests, across swollen and frozen streams in the dead of winter, without the danger of being killed and scalped by Indians already on the warpath.

George did not suppose the French soldiers would enjoy being warned off the premises they claimed to have more right to than the English, but he said he would go, and do the best he could.

He started from Williamsburg, the capital of Virginia, on the 30th of October, 1753, on the same day the Governor handed him the letter which was to tell the French commander, in po-

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lite, indirect language, to leave their posts as they had no right there. The young envoy was instructed to go first to Logstown, the council village of the Ohio Indians, and get some of the chiefs to go with him to the French headquarters. He was to wait there not over a week for a reply, to observe and find out all that he could while there, and to ask the French to send an escort of French back with him.

Young Washington started off without any escort, picking up Van Braam, his old fencing master, at Fredericksburg, where he called to say good-bye to his mother, who, naturally enough, did not approve of their sending her son on such a dangerous journey. Van Braam went with him as interpreter to the French, though he afterward showed that he was not very well skilled in that language. At Wills's Creek (now Cumberland) he met Christopher Gist, the guide and scout who had long been in the employ of the Ohio Company. Here the brave little expedition was fitted out. John Davidson was engaged as Indian interpreter, though both George and Gist had had experience with several Indian dialects. Four woodsmen went with them to drive and take care of the horses and

George Washington

provisions. The cavalcade set off on horseback, the 11th of November, through rain, sleet, and snow, to the nearest point on the Monongahela River, at the mouth of Turtle Creek.

Here the young Major found John Frazier, who had been a gunmaster at the trading posts of Venango. He had made his escape, though other English traders there were captured and carried off to Canada. The autumn rains and snows had raised the rivers so that Washington and his caravan were obliged to swim their horses. He decided to send their baggage and stores down the Monongahela in a canoe with directions to wait for him at the "Fork of the Ohio," as the junction of the Monongahela with the Allegheny was called. In the diary which he kept of this journey he wrote the following shrewd observation:

"As I got down before the canoe I spent some time in viewing the rivers, and the land at the Fork, which I think extremely well situated for a fort, as it has the absolute command of both rivers, which are a quarter of a mile or more across, and run very nearly at right angles."

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Not far from this fork dwelt a powerful Delaware chief named Shingis. The young diplomat made him a formal visit, as he had been rather unfriendly to the English, and invited him to meet the white men and Indians in council at Logstown.

Shingis complied, and when they reached Logstown, on the evening of the 24th of November, they found that Tanacharisson was absent at his hunting lodge. Swift runners were sent to notify him and other chiefs of a grand council at Logstown.

In the morning four French deserters arrived in camp. Washington plied them with questions as to the forts, the forces, and the intentions of the French along the Ohio and Mississippi as far south as New Orleans, and noted down the information they gave him. The Half King having arrived during the day, the chiefs gravely assembled in the council house. The Virginian major presented them with speech belts and made an address to them through his interpreter. When the English envoy ceased speaking the chiefs sat in a solemn circle smoking silently. After a long while Tanacharisson arose and in a flowery harangue assured the

George Washington

white ambassadors that they loved the English as brothers, and volunteered to fling back with words of scorn the speech belts of the French.

The Indians explained, by pulling up imaginary blankets under their chins as if for the night, that it was five or six "sleeps," or days' journey, from Logstown to Venango, which had been the headquarters of the French commandant. After due deliberation the council decided to send three chiefs from as many tribes, as an escort, but three days would be necessary to prepare for the journey. Though the young major was impatient at this delay he made no sign, for fear of offending the dignity of the Indians. At last the chiefs, Tanacharisson himself, Jeskakake, and White Thunder set off with them.

It was only seventy miles to Venango. Washington saw, with indignation, that the French flag was floating over the big square log cabin which had once been occupied by Frazier, the gunsmith. On their arrival they asked several rough-looking men they met where they could find the commandant. One of them replied roughly, "I have the command of the Ohio." But when the young diplomat made his errand

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known, the man said there was a still higher officer to be found at the fort to the northward, fifteen miles from Lake Erie. The brusque commandant at Venango proved to be Captain Chabert de Joncaire, whose mother was an Indian. The English envoy and his companions were invited to a supper that night. The hospitality was rough but warm, and the bottle was passed around freely. Major Washington preferred to keep his wits about him, but the French began to talk recklessly enough. Washington wrote in his journal:

“The wine, as they dosed themselves pretty plentifully with it, soon banished all the restraint which at first appeared in their conversation and gave a license to their tongues to reveal their sentiments more freely.

“They told me that it was their absolute design to take possession of the Ohio, and by G— they would do it; for although they were sensible the English could raise two men to their one, yet they knew their motions were too slow and dilatory to prevent any undertaking. They pretend to have an undoubted right to the river from a dis-

George Washington

covery made by one LaSalle sixty years ago."

The day after the backwoods banquet was too stormy to allow the English party to proceed farther. Washington had been too wary to allow the French to see his Indian chiefs, but Captain Joncaire discovered their hiding place and greeted the Half King, old Jeskakake, and White Thunder with such demonstrations of joy that he was irresistible. The Indians were loaded with gifts and plied with liquor till they forgot all about returning the French speech belts with the promised scorn.

The next day the Half King was somewhat ashamed of himself and tried to redeem the time by calling the French into the council chamber where he made a speech and gave back the wampum, but the fire had been drawn from his wrath, and Joncaire refused to receive the belts, referring the Indian chiefs, as he had the white men, to the commandant of the fort near the source of French Creek. But Joncaire would not let them go for several days longer, for he managed to keep the Indians too drunk to travel. When they did get away from him, on the 7th of

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December, the Captain sent with them a commissary, named La Force, who proved a spy and a great mischief maker, with a guard of four Frenchmen. After four weary days of wading through swamps and snow, Washington and his variegated escort of English, Indians, and French reached the fort. Here they were received by the gray-haired commandant, Chevalier Legardeur de St. Pierre, with a politeness and dignity in keeping with the importance of their mission. The boy diplomat, for such he seemed to the aged Chevalier, presented Governor Dinwiddie's diplomatic "notice to quit," which closed with the following reference to the Virginian envoy:

"I persuade myself you will receive and entertain Major Washington with the candor and politeness natural to your nation, and it will give me the greatest satisfaction if you can return him with an answer suitable to my wishes for a long and lasting peace between us."

The Chevalier de St. Pierre required two days to translate the Governor's letter and frame a

George Washington

suitable reply. Meanwhile the young envoy saw and heard all there was to be seen and heard—from the fort itself, built about a hollow square, with bastions and palisades twelve feet high, and a guard house and chapel inside, to the number of canoes which might be ready for transporting soldiers down the river during the coming spring.

On the evening of the 14th the Chevalier de St. Pierre delivered to Washington, sealed, his reply to the Governor of Virginia's letter. It was a shrewd but courteous letter, referring the Governor to "the man higher up," Marquis Duquesne, then military Governor of Canada. But the white men of the party could not induce the Indians to leave with them. Washington relates in his journal :

"The Commandant ordered a plentiful store of liquor and provisions to be put on board our canoes, and appeared to be extremely complaisant, though he was exerting every artifice which he could invent to set our Indians at variance with us, to prevent their going till after our departure; presents, rewards, and everything which could be sug-

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gested by him or his officers. I cannot say that ever in my life I suffered so much anxiety as I did in this affair. I saw that every stratagem which the most fruitful brain could invent was practised to win Half King to their interests, and that leaving them there was giving them the opportunity they aimed at.

“I went to the Half King, and pressed him in the strongest terms to go; he told me that the Commandant would not discharge him until the next morning. I then went to the Commandant and complained to him of ill-treatment; for keeping them, as they were a part of my company, was detaining me. This he promised not to do, but to forward my journey as much as he could. He protested he did not keep them, but was ignorant of the cause of their stay; though I soon found it out. He had promised them a present of guns if they would wait until the morning. As I am very much pressed by the Indians to wait this day for them, I consented, on the promise that nothing should hinder them in the morning.”

George Washington

CHAPTER XI

YOUNG WASHINGTON'S TWO HAIRBREADTH ESCAPES

THE next morning the French felt obliged to give the Indians the guns they had promised. Then they offered the chiefs more liquor, which the poor Indians found nearly as hard to leave behind as the guns. But early in the day, before the chiefs could be intoxicated, the young diplomat appealed to the Half King's Indian sense of honor, reminding him that he had pledged his royal word that they would go when they got the guns from the French. With the aid of the Half King and the Virginians, Washington escorted old Jeskakake and White Thunder down to the creek.

They went as if they were prisoners of state. The French commander fired a volley speeding the parting guests as if they were the embassy of a world power, and tried to load a canoe with some wines for their journey. The party embarked in two large canoes, the white men in one

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and the Indians in the other. Though the conditions were not favorable for a canoe race between the white men and red, there seems to have been a little of the race spirit. The Indians ran ahead the first day. The white men's canoe proceeded sixteen miles and camped for the night. They caught up with the Indians next day, for they had stopped and gone on a bear hunt, bagging three of the big beasts. The whole party spent the rest of the day in camp here to allow the Indians to have their feast and bear dance, and to wait for one of their number who had not returned from the hunt.

The next morning the missing Indian had come back, so the white men went ahead. They traveled two days when their passage was blocked by an ice dam. After trying to break a way through this they gave it up and, carrying their canoe and cargo across a point of land, launched it in clear water. Before long they were overtaken by the Indians, with three more canoes of Frenchmen, and the crew of a fourth canoe which had been lost in the creek with a load of powder and lead. The whole party camped that night about twenty miles above Venango.

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The creek had been so high as to be turbulent and dangerous, but now it had fallen so fast all hands had to get out, again and again, for fear the canoes would upset, and wade in the freezing water for half an hour at a time, pulling the frail crafts about and dragging them over shallow places clogged with rocks which were covered with a coating of ice.

Once, in deep water, a French canoe capsized, dumping its cargo of wine and brandy into the icy water. As liquors had caused them so much trouble, the Virginians paddled by and, as it is recorded in Washington's journal, "let them shift for themselves."

On the 22d, after six days of rough and hazardous experiences that strange flotilla of canoes arrived at Venango. Washington and his retinue marched up to the Captain's cabin with their clothes frozen stiff and glistening, like knights of old in icy armor. Jolly Captain Joncaire received them again with hearty hospitality.

Being half Indian himself, he knew how to appeal to the Indian chiefs by flattery, and making up to them for the liquor they had ruefully left behind them at the fort. With wiles and

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wines he succeeded so well that Washington had to leave them behind at Venango, after all, in the power of the crafty half-breed. The harassed envoy thus describes his difficulties at this point in his journal:

“Dec. 23d [1753]. When I got things ready to set off I sent for the Half King to know whether he intended to go with us or by water. He told me that White Thunder had hurt himself much, and was sick and unable to walk; therefore he was obliged to carry him down the Allegheny and Ohio to Logstown in a canoe.

“As I found he intended to stay here a day or two, and knew that Monsieur Joncaire would employ every scheme to set him against the English, as he had before done, I told him I hoped he would guard against his flattery, and let no fine speeches influence him in their favor. He desired I might not be concerned, for he knew the French too well for anything to engage him in their behalf.

“Our horses were now so weak and feeble, and the baggage so heavy (as we were obliged to provide all the neces-

George Washington

saries which the journey would require) that we doubted much their performing [carrying] it. Therefore, myself and others (except the drivers, who were obliged to ride) gave up our horses for packs to assist along with the baggage.

“I put myself in an Indian walking dress, and continued with them three days, till I saw there was no possibility of their getting home in any reasonable time. The horses grew less able to travel every day; the cold increased very fast; and the roads were becoming much worse by a deep snow, continually freezing.

“Therefore, as I was uneasy to get back to make a report of my proceedings to his Honor the Governor, I determined to prosecute my journey the nearest way through the woods on foot.

“Accordingly I left Mr. Van Braam in charge of our baggage, with money and directions to provide necessaries from place to place for themselves and horses and to make the most convenient despatch in traveling.

“I took my necessary papers, pulled off my clothes, and tied myself up in a match coat. Then with gun in hand,

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and pack at my back, in which were my papers and provisions, I set out with Mr. Gist, fitted in the same manner, on Wednesday, the 26th."

That boy was "father to the man." Young Washington makes no reference to giving up his own horse and walking over terrible roads through woods and swamps to help the horses with the baggage at Christmas time! He showed the same spirit which distinguished him twenty-three years later when he spent Christmas Day, 1776, preparing to cross the Delaware that night in a blinding storm and the wide river filled with floating ice, and so cold that some of his men froze to death.

Gist had objected that the major was not used to walking, and it would be unwise for him to make such a long journey on foot. But, as Washington insisted that it must be done, the sturdy pioneer started out with him, through the trackless forest.

They walked eighteen miles the first day. On the third day they came to a place called Murdering-town, probably because of a massacre which had taken place there. Washington records that they "fell in with a party of

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French Indians who had lain in wait for us."

It was often a mystery, even to those experienced pioneers, how the news could have traveled so fast that those Indians became aware that two lone men were coming their way on foot. Some fleet-footed Indian on snow-shoes must have carried the word while the "pale-faces" were wading and floundering along as fast as they could with their guns and heavy packs.

One of the Indians came forward extending his hand and calling Mr. Gist by his Indian name. They all asked too many questions and showed too much curiosity to please the white men. Gist had proposed that they strike from there across to Shannopin's town, within a few miles of the Fork of the Ohio instead of taking the long route around. Neither of the white men had been through that part of the country, so they asked the Indian who seemed to know Gist to guide them. This the fellow was very willing to do. They set off at once, the Indian carrying Washington's pack. By the time they had walked ten miles the young white man's feet, as Gist had feared, were so sore as to make him propose that they stop and rest there all

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night. Gist was suspicious of their too willing guide, whom he thought he had seen during their first stop at Venango. He was apparently leading them in the wrong direction, too far to the north. The Indian turned and, seeing that the young "paleface" walked with great difficulty, offered to carry his gun, but Washington declined to let him, for he also was uneasy about the fellow.

Then the Indian grew surly and menacing. He said they were near an encampment of Ottawas who would be sure to kill them if they stopped to camp there as Washington wanted to do. In fact, he claimed he had just heard the report of a gun in the direction of his own cabin, so he started directly north, pretending to lead them there for the night.

This was too much, and Washington directed the Indian to camp beside the next stream, but as they came about two miles farther to a clearing, he commanded the guide to stop there and light their campfire. Suddenly the Indian, seeing that he could decoy them along no farther, wheeled, fired point blank at them, and jumped behind a white oak tree.

"Shot?" gasped Washington.



YOUNG WASHINGTON DISARMING THE INDIAN.

George Washington

“No,” replied Gist; they made a rush at the tree and caught the Indian reloading. They took away his musket and finished loading it before his eyes. He expected to be shot with his own gun. Gist proposed to dispatch him at once, but Washington objected. How could they get rid of him if they did not kill him. After a hurried consultation Gist said to the Indian:

“You fired your gun to get an answer from your cabin?”

The wretch thought, “These palefaces are silly enough to think it was an accident after all!” and nodded assent. He knew they were foolish not to kill him, as he deserved to be, even if they did not shoot him in self-defense. He said it was not far to his cabin, and he would hurry on and bring back help.

“You go home,” said Gist. “I am very tired and the major’s feet are very much sore—too sore to walk another step this night. We will follow your tracks in the morning.”

The Indian was more than glad to get away so easily. Gist followed him and listened until the scoundrel had gone several miles. Then the two white men took up their heavy loads and hurried as fast as they could in the opposite direction.

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Washington hobbled along all that night. It was really a race for life, as there were savage enemies all around them who would be glad to kill two lone white men, and take their scalps. They did not dare to stop to make a fire, or even to eat, for fear of being tracked by the treacherous guide, leading other Indians on to do what he had attempted and failed.

They came to Piney Creek in the morning, and followed it all day along down toward the Allegheny. Before night they found the tracks of an Indian hunting party. They left their tracks—they also wore moccasins—among those of the Indians, as though they had been hunting also, and then separated so that their trails would not be seen together beyond that place. After walking alone several miles they dared to stop awhile to eat and sleep the sleep of the utterly exhausted.

After another day they arrived, footsore and nearly frozen, at the Allegheny River. They could not feel safe until they had put that great river between them and the murderous savages. It had been so bitterly cold that they hoped to find the river frozen over solid, but the middle of the stream was still uncovered, and filled with

George Washington

floating ice. They worked all one day, cutting down trees and building a raft of logs pinned together, all with one poor little hatchet. It was dark before they succeeded in launching their crude raft and got adrift mid-stream among the floating blocks of ice. Before they could push themselves half way across, the raft got caught in an ice floe and was turning up on edge, when Washington, to stop this, and to hold the raft still and let the troublesome ice float by, set his pole between the ice blocks and the raft. The pole got caught in such a way that the force of the swift current threw him into ten feet of water. Quick as a flash he caught on the end of a projecting log, or he would have been carried under the ice where nothing could have saved him. Gist helped him back upon the raft, and in a few minutes his clothing was frozen stiff.

Here was a desperate state of affairs. They could neither cross the river nor stay in the channel without great peril. What could they do? They looked at each other, but neither spoke. At last they found themselves floating rapidly near a small island in the middle of the stream. They managed to get to this place of safety for the night. Still they were not safe.

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The Indians could see and shoot them from the shore, for there was no shelter. They made a fire, however, and slept, though they were in danger of freezing to death while asleep. The cold was so terrible that Gist, hardened as he was by many adventures, had all of his fingers and some of his toes frozen.

By morning the bitter cold from which they were suffering had prepared a way for their escape. The river was now frozen over, and they walked the rest of the way across from the island on solid ice.

Another day's tramping brought them again to Turtle Creek and to the house of Frazier, the trapper and gunsmith who had escaped from the French and Indians at Venango.

While waiting at Frazier's to purchase two horses on which to continue their journey, Washington improved the opportunity to call on an old Indian queen, Alliquippa, who, he heard, was feeling slighted because he had not called on her on his way northward.

Young as he was, he saw the importance of doing everything in his power to make friends of all the Indians he could influence in favor of the English. To this end he gave her a match-

George Washington

coat and a bottle of rum. With a touch of humor he entered in his diary that the woman chief seemed to consider the rum the “better present of the two.” It is well known that in Washington’s day the present prejudice against strong drink did not exist even among religious people.

After picking up a pair of horses, Washington and Gist proceeded on their way. The young envoy stayed one night with the Fairfaxes, at “Belvoir,” and reported to Governor Dinwiddie, delivering Chevalier St. Pierre’s reply on the 16th of January, 1754.

CHAPTER XII

MAJOR WASHINGTON’S FIRST BATTLE

THE quaint “Journal” of the youthful ambassador was published and given a wide circulation in England as well as among the American colonies. Then statesmen and men of affairs on both sides of the Atlantic realized that the French attitude and Chevalier de St.

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Pierre's diplomatic reply to the Governor of Virginia meant war for the control of the western territory in America.

Governor Dinwiddie promptly wrote letters to the governors of the other colonies to unite and prepare for the great struggle.

In order that Virginia might take the lead, the Governor sent Captain Trent, who had been frightened back from the French outposts, to superintend the building of a fort at the fork of the Ohio, as the observing young envoy had recommended.

After him Governor Dinwiddie sent Major Washington with one hundred and fifty men untrained and poorly equipped to help in building and defending the fort. They were to find Captain Trent with pack horses and supplies at Wills's Creek, a trading post about one hundred and fifty miles on the road.

At Wills's Creek Washington found bad news instead of horses. Captain Trent had left the fort he was building, and his second in command had also found business elsewhere, leaving the unfinished fort in care of Ensign Ward, with only forty-one men to erect and protect it.

Before Washington and his men arrived at

George Washington

Wills's Creek they heard that Captain Trent and all his men had been captured by a thousand French, but this rumor proved false. A large body of French and Indians under a captain named Contrecoeur suddenly appeared up the river in six large boats and about three hundred canoes, and swarmed around the half-completed fort.

It was useless for Ward with forty badly equipped men to hold out against so many hundreds of the enemy. He surrendered on condition that he and his followers should be allowed to retreat into the woods with their tools as well as their lives and scalps.

The French tore down the little fort the English had begun and built a larger fortification at the junction of the Allegheny and the Monongahela Rivers, where Pittsburgh now stands, and named it Fort Duquesne, in honor of a general then in command in the French province of Canada.

Still young Washington pushed on with three hundred and fifty men (two hundred so-called soldiers had been forwarded to Wills's Creek) to meet three times as many French and Indians and keep them from invading Virginia. He

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began clearing and building roads which should be of service when the other governors should send their companies in the defense of the colonies.

For several reasons very few soldiers were forthcoming. The colonies were governed by men sent from England who were so arbitrary and overbearing that they did not inspire confidence in themselves nor loyalty to the English king.

Besides, there were many Quakers, especially in Pennsylvania, who did not believe in war, so the young major of militia had a poor, ragged lot to command. Some of the companies arriving from other colonies refused to assist in the work of constructing roads or building defenses, because Washington had not received his rank direct from the King of England. They called themselves "Independents," and were too independent to work. They only stood by and jeered at the heroic, half-starved Virginians and their brave and patient leader, who worked like a beaver to defend themselves and their families against the French invaders.

Yet Major Washington, not daunted by these exasperating circumstances, pressed on toward

George Washington

the junction of the two rivers that form the Ohio. In this he was perhaps more brave than wise.

Advancing slowly, because of annoying delays and difficulties, he and his men reached a broad level field, known as Great Meadows, at the base of Laurel Hill, a low mountain of the Alleghenies, not far from the Monongahela. Here he found what he called "a charming place for an encounter," and began to throw up an embankment and erect a palisade, which he named, because of their many hardships and privations, Fort Necessity.

While engaged in this work, Washington heard of a number of Frenchmen prowling about. Picking out forty of his men, he started on a "pitch dark" night in the driving rain to discover their whereabouts. He wrote of this experience:

"The path was hardly wide enough for one man; we often lost it, and could not find it again for fifteen or twenty minutes, and we often tumbled over each other in the dark."

Just before sunrise on the 28th of May, 1754, they reached the camp of some friendly Indians,

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who joined them in their stealthy march, single file, through the woods to find where the French were hiding.

Suddenly they came upon the enemy in a hollow among the rocks. The French sprang up, surprised, and seized their guns. Washington, who was in front, gave the order to fire. A sharp skirmish followed, and Jumonville, the French ensign in command, was killed, with nine of his men. One man on Washington's side was killed and several wounded. Twenty-two of the French were made prisoners and marched back to Great Meadows.

This was Washington's first battle. He had fired the first shot himself. Sending his prisoners back to Winchester, he wrote to Governor Dinwiddie from Fort Necessity:

“Your Honor may depend I will not be surprised, let them come at what hour they will; and this is as much as I can promise. But my best endeavors shall not be wasted to effect more.

“I doubt not if you hear I am beaten, but you will hear at the same time that we have done our duty, in fighting as long as there was a shadow of hope.”

George Washington

Brave words for a military commander of twenty-two! Yet this was not a boastful utterance, for the young commander did much more than he promised.

Of Washington's first battle and its far-reaching consequences, Thackeray wrote, more than a hundred years later:

“It was strange that in a savage forest of Pennsylvania, a young Virginian officer should fire a shot and waken up a war that was to last for sixty years, which was to cover his own country and pass into Europe, to cost France her American colonies, to sever ours from us [English] and create the great Western Republic; to rage over the Old World when extinguished in the New; and of all the myriads engaged in the vast contest, to leave the prize of greatest fame to him who struck the first blow!”

WHAT WASHINGTON DID ON THE FOURTH OF JULY, TWENTY-TWO YEARS BEFORE THE GREAT DECLARATION

A friend of George the Second, the English King, while speaking of the first encounter of

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what came to be known as the French and Indian War, told that monarch that George Washington had remarked that "the whistling of bullets was like music."

King George replied, "If that young man had heard more bullets he would not have thought so."

Late in life, after this story was widely printed, some one asked Washington if he had ever said such a thing. With a smile the old general replied:

"If I did so, it must have been when I was very young."

The French raised an indignant hue and cry because a harmless party of their men on the way to confer with the English had been surprised and shot down in cold blood. Several of the prisoners Washington had sent to Virginia, under a strong escort, tried to make Governor Dinwiddie believe they had been unfairly attacked.

The young commander had treated his prisoners courteously, and had given two of them clothing from his own scant supply. But they told every one who would listen that they had been surprised and shot down while on a peace-

George Washington

ful mission, merely to warn the English against advancing farther.

Washington made a vigorous denial of their claims, and showed that they were stealing about to catch him off guard, just as he had surprised them. In a letter to the Governor he wrote:

“I doubt not but they will endeavor to amuse you with many smooth stories, as they did me; but they were confuted in them all, and, by circumstances too plain to be denied, almost made ashamed of their assertions.

“I have heard since they went away they would say they called on us not to fire; but that I know to be false, for I was the first man that approached them, and the first whom they saw, and they immediately ran to their arms and fired briskly till they were defeated. . . .

“I fancy they will have the assurance of asking the privilege due to an embassy, when in strict justice they ought to be hanged as spies of the worst sort.”

The surrounding Indians began to flock to Fort Necessity, and other companies came up from Wills’s Creek to aid in repelling the advance of the French.

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Their colonel, Joshua Fry, had died in the interval, and Washington was left in command of the English resistance.

But Captain Mackaye, who came with a company from South Carolina, refused to serve under Washington, who was merely a Colonial officer. Young Washington, with characteristic tact and courtesy, avoided a serious conflict of authority by advancing with his men thirteen miles to a place at which Christopher Gist, the scout and his companion of the year before, had made a small settlement, thus leaving Captain Mackaye in command at Fort Necessity.

The Indian spies came back with reports of more than a thousand French and Indians swarming southward. He ordered a retreat to Fort Necessity, which flimsy stockade they now hastened to strengthen, though Mackaye's "regulars" from South Carolina refused even then to do any real work. Washington sent a company back to Wills's Creek for supplies and reinforcements, but within two days the little palisade at Great Meadows was surrounded by nine hundred French, and many Indian allies.

Even then Washington went outside and fought the enemy stubbornly, but the handful of

George Washington

Virginians were finally driven back inside their intrenchments.

Without a roof they were at the mercy of the elements. The rain fell in torrents. De Villiers, a brother-in-law of the dead Jumonville, in command of the French, summoned Washington to surrender.

The young commander, who had been forced to rid himself of many of his too "independent" white soldiers, was now deserted by his Indian allies; also, being without provisions and short of ammunition he decided that "the better part of valor is discretion." Accordingly he sent Jacob Van Braam, his so-called interpreter of the year before, to arrange terms of capitulation with the French.

Here already was an occasion for the commander to regret that he had not learned French in Rector Marye's school; for the terms of surrender were written in that language.

It suited the ghastly humor of de Villiers to refer in the articles of agreement to the death of his brother-in-law at the skirmish in Great Meadows, as if he had been assassinated in a cowardly manner. So, when Washington signed the terms of capitulation, he unwittingly affixed

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his name to what appeared to be a confession of murder!

Afterward, when the character of the document became known, Van Braam explained that he was not aware of anything offensive in the following paragraph which closed the articles of capitulation, of which the following is a translation:

“Art. 7th. Since the English have in their power an officer and two cadets, and in general all the prisoners whom they took *when they assassinated Sieur de Jumonville*, they now promise to send them with an escort to Fort Duquesne. . . .

“And to secure the safe performance of this article, as well as of this treaty, Messrs. Jacob Van Braam and Robert Stobo, both captains, shall be delivered to us as hostages until the arrival of our French and Canadians mentioned above. . . .

(Signed) “JAMES MACKAYE, G. C.,
“G^o WASHINGTON,
“COULON VILLIER.”

It will be observed that while Washington was in actual command, he allowed Mackaye to sign

George Washington

as general commander, while he was content with his accustomed “G^o Washington,” without any rank or title. In this way he began early to manifest his true greatness. He had already learned to *command* the highest respect by not *demanding* it.

According to the articles of agreement Washington was allowed to march away with his men, without being scalped or molested, but with “the honors of war.”

So, on July 4, 1754, he and his little company, “snatching victory from the jaws of defeat,” marched out of Fort Necessity, without ammunition or provisions, but with drums beating and colors flying!

Tanacharisson, the Half King, who led their Indian allies, tried to excuse their treachery in deserting the English in their time of need and peril by explaining that in the struggle between the contending white forces “the French acted like cowards, and the English like fools.”

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CHAPTER XIII

WASHINGTON'S TERRIBLE EXPERIENCES WITH AN ENGLISH GENERAL

ACCORDING to an agreement he signed with the French commander, Washington promised to abstain from building forts for at least one year. He must have had bitterness in his heart as he rode away from the scene of his first victory and his first defeat.

It was an injustice that he was forced to retreat at all. Those who should have worked side by side with him had refused, under the silliest of pretexts, to help in the defense of the country. They should have been summarily dealt with for their foolish treachery, but Governor Dinwiddie upheld them in their absurd stickling for official precedence.

Then the Indians were hardly to blame for deserting him when they saw how his white brothers failed to help him in the time of his

George Washington

great need. Reinforcements, and even provisions, had been withheld, and he had been rendered helpless in every possible way. Yet he had stayed and met the enemy, instead of running away, as cowardly Captain Trent had done twice.

The Virginia House of Burgesses appreciated his heroic struggles and passed a vote of thanks to him and his officers, "for their bravery and gallant defense of their country," and awarded his men a pistole (about four dollars) apiece.

Although George Washington, at twenty-two, had heard bullets singing about him, and had stood nine hours under fire from a far superior force, he had learned that the pick and spade are mightier than the sword and musket, and that tact and courtesy are even more powerful than weapons of war.

Washington, as executor of Lawrence's large estate, was able to give it more capable management than his brother's widow could have done. The young ladies of the neighborhood, also, were pleased to honor him as hero, for his Virginia soldiers had come home with glowing accounts of his manliness and courage. Though

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his ardor seemed not in the least dampened by his reverses, he must have been glad of the year's respite from military labors agreed upon in the French articles of capitulation.

Virginia's foolish Governor treated the prisoners of war badly. This rankled in the young major's bosom more deeply than the personal injustice he himself had suffered. Governor Dinwiddie was so subservient to the influences of the officers appointed by the crown that Washington resigned his commission in disgust and retired to private life at Mount Vernon.

The French were so elated because of their doubtful victory over a handful of men at Fort Necessity that they relaxed their vigilance at Fort Duquesne. Captain Stobo, one of the hostages, regardless of the danger to himself and Van Braam, the other surety, addressed a secret letter to the commander of the English troops. This reached the Governor of Pennsylvania, and was finally forwarded to Governor Dinwiddie. With this heroic missive was a plan of the fort.

"There are two hundred men here," wrote Stobo, "and two hundred expected; the rest have gone off in detach-

George Washington

ments to the amount of one thousand, besides Indians. None lodge in the fort but Contrecœur and the guard, consisting of forty men and five officers; the rest lodge in bark cabins around the fort.

“The Indians have access, day and night, and come and go when they please. If one hundred trusty Shawnees, Mingoes, and Delawares were picked out they might surprise the fort, lodging themselves under the palisades by day, and at night secure the guards with their tomahawks—shut the sally-gate—and the fort is ours! . . .

“Consider the good of the expedition without regard to us. When we engaged to serve the country it was expected that we were to do it with our lives.

“For my part, I would die a hundred deaths to have the pleasure of possessing this fort but one day.

“They are so vain of their success at the Meadows it was worse than death to hear them.

“Haste to strike!”

Governor Dinwiddie, instead of giving up the prisoners, as had been agreed between the

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French and English, so that the heroic Stobo and Van Braam might be released, requested Washington to take a few men and capture Fort Duquesne as Stobo had suggested.

Washington, indignant at Dinwiddie's treachery and exasperated by his sanction of the contemptible conduct of the crown officers and men, flatly refused to consider the matter. Besides, he knew something of the difficulties and hardships of such a campaign in winter. Brave as he was, his courage was tempered with discretion.

During the following year, 1755, Governor Dinwiddie's agitation began to bear fruit. General Edward Braddock was sent from England to conquer the French and Indians in their western wilderness. Braddock was a valiant and successful general, but he believed in doing everything according to scientific regulations laid down in the European military manuals. Arrogant and quick-tempered, he resented the suggestions from the colonists as to the best way to fight the Indians and backwoodsmen.

Dr. Benjamin Franklin, the great man of Pennsylvania, attempted to remonstrate with him, but the English general, he said, "smiled at

George Washington

my ignorance and replied, ‘These savages may, indeed, be a formidable enemy to your raw American militia, but upon the king’s regular and disciplined troops, sir, it is impossible that they should make an impression.’”

Braddock invited Washington to take a place on his staff as *aide-de-camp* and adviser. Yet the general would accept none of his advice. The *aide* spoke of having “frequent disputes” with his chief. He once wrote to a friend that Braddock was “incapable of giving up any point he asserts, be it ever so incompatible with reason or common sense.”

In spite of all the British general’s arrogance and testiness, he had a high opinion of Washington, for he wrote of him: “He strikes me as being a young man of extraordinary and exalted character, and is destined to make no inconsiderable figure in our country.”

But Washington was not satisfied to have the great British general think well of him, personally. He suffered because of the wrong that was being done to Braddock himself, to the army, and the country by the English general’s stubborn self-sufficiency.

On the route of march General Braddock de-

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tailed Washington to return to Winchester, with an escort of eight men, to convoy an iron chest containing four thousand pounds in money to pay off the soldiers.

The *aide* referred to the courage of his escort in the following terms: "Which eight men were two days assembling, but I believe they would not have been more than as many seconds dispersing if I had been attacked."

After bringing up the "sinews of war" in the treasure chest, Washington suffered much from Braddock's painful deliberation in working his way toward Fort Duquesne.

"I found," he wrote a friend, "that instead of pushing on with vigor, without regarding a little rough road, they were halting to level every mole-hill, and to erect bridges over every brook, by which means we were four days in getting twelve miles."

The *aide's* impatience, combined with other conditions, threw him into a raging fever. Unable to ride, he had to be carried over the rough forest roads in a lumbering covered wagon. He became so ill that he was left



YOUNG WASHINGTON RALLIES BRADDOCK'S TROOPS.



George Washington

behind with a doctor and several attendants.

This was a painful ordeal for Washington. Before he was pronounced well enough to ride he made his escape from the hospital tent, mounted his horse, and dashed furiously after the army.

He caught up just in time, as the troops were fording the Monongahela, and about to attack the fort. The splendid appearance of the troops, in their scarlet uniforms, and glittering arms and equipments, filled him with enthusiasm.

Suddenly there was firing in front and blood-curdling war-whoops resounded on all sides. The van of Braddock's army fell back and threw the even ranks into disorder. They had fallen into an ambush.

Once more Washington implored the general to order the soldiers into the woods, to shield themselves from the deadly fire which was pouring in upon them from all sides.

But the young *aide* again pleaded in vain. Braddock obstinately decreed that the soldiers must fight in platoons or not at all. They did not fight at all. They could not. The men stood in one another's way, dazed and horror-stricken. They huddled together in terror, for they had

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not been prepared for the devilish din of Indian warfare. The savages, dancing around them like fiends, slaughtered them as they would cattle. The British regulars broke and fled in a wild panic.

The stubborn general paid for his obstinacy with his life. Seven hundred English soldiers and sixty-two out of eighty-six officers were killed, by only two hundred Frenchmen and six hundred Indians.

When Braddock was mortally wounded Washington took command. He rode up and down, all reckless of the closeness of the Indians and French, fighting like a demon, and striving to rally the "cowardly regulars," as he afterward called the routed British soldiers.

The only fighting worthy of the name, on the English side, was done by the men Braddock had sneered at as "raw American militia." They were at last permitted to fight the Indians in their own way, and though they were nearly all killed they sold their lives dearly and saved the day—or, rather, the *night*, for the retreat was all that was left to save.

As for Washington, he dashed hither and thither, trying to bring up the artillery, and

George Washington

when no one would serve a cannon he fired it himself. In the mad rush of that awful afternoon his escape from death was so miraculous that the Indians believed his life was charmed and they could not kill him. He was reported dead by some of the fugitives who reached the various Virginia settlements.

Braddock had fought with the utmost heroism. He had several horses shot under him. He cursed his men for their cowardice, and struck some of them with the flat of his sword. In frantic rage he fought for three hours. About five o'clock in the afternoon he fell from his horse with a wound he knew would be fatal. Two Virginia officers bore him from the field and he died expressing regrets for his obstinacy in not taking Washington's advice.

They dragged him away on the retreat, but he died the next day. Washington read the service for the dead over his body, which they buried hastily in a hollowed-out log in the wilderness.

Meanwhile the French and Indians did not try to follow the retreating English. Satisfied with their "famous victory," they spent their time dividing the spoil, drinking the rum and

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eating the bacon they had found, and in fiendish joy counting over the many English scalps they had taken.

Washington stopped to rest at Fort Cumberland, which had been built at Wills's Creek trading post. From this point he wrote to his brother, on the 18th of July, 1755:

“DEAR BROTHER: As I have heard, since my arrival at this place, a circumstantial account of my death and dying speech, I take this early opportunity of contradicting the first, and of assuring you that I have not as yet composed the latter.

“But by the all-powerful dispensations of Providence, I have been protected beyond all human probability and expectation; for I had four bullets through my coat, and two horses shot under me, yet escaped unhurt, altho' death was leveling my companions on every side of me!

“We have been most scandalously beaten by a trifling body of men, but fatigue and want of time will prevent me from giving you any of the details until I have the happiness of seeing you at Mount Vernon, which I now

George Washington

most ardently wish for, since we are drove in this far.

“A weak and feeble state of health obliges me to halt here for two or three days to recover a little strength, that I may be able to proceed homewards with more ease.

“You may expect to see me there on on Saturday or Sunday *se'night*, [week] which is as soon as I can well be down, as I shall take my Bullskin Plantations in my way.

“Pray give my compliments to all my friends.

“I am, dear Jack,

“Your most affectionate brother,

“GEORGE.”

CHAPTER XIV

SETTLING TWO IMPORTANT QUESTIONS FOR LIFE

IT WAS July 26, 1755, when Washington returned to Mount Vernon. He was now master of that great estate, first by his father's will, and the legacy of his older brother, through

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the recent death of Lawrence's little daughter.

The horrible battle at Fort Duquesne and the sad and painful retreat, while he was still suffering the ravages of a fever, had impaired his health.

Yet the people of Virginia, official and otherwise, begged him to accept the office of commander-in-chief of the troops of that province. His mother was now as anxious that George should relinquish his military career as she had been, eight years earlier, for him to give up going to sea. On the 14th of August he wrote to her: "If it is in my power to avoid going to the Ohio again, I shall; but if the command is pressed upon me by the general voice of the country, and offered upon such terms as cannot be objected against, it would reflect dishonor on me to refuse it."

President Robinson, of the House of Burgesses, wrote Washington that the people wanted him to take his place at the head of the military affairs of the province. The young men of Virginia now began to curry favor with the young gentleman of whom they had once thought slightly because he earned money as a land surveyor.

George Washington

One of his friends wrote him that “if a Saturday night’s rest cannot be sufficient to enable your coming here to-morrow, the ladies will get horses, or attempt their strength on foot to salute you, so desirous are they, with loving speed, to have an ocular demonstration of your being the same identical gent (!) that lately departed to defend his country’s cause.”

Archibald Cary, a member of one of the famous “First Families of Virginia,” wrote the young *aide-de-camp*, at this time, that “Mrs. Cary and Miss Randolph join in wishing you that sort of glory which will most endear you to the fair sex.”

The ladies, who are always thought to be attracted especially by gold lace and buttons, were the more charmed to know a young officer who had bullet holes in his coat as well as gilt buttons on it. So George Washington was subjected to as many flattering attentions as a modern matinee idol!

Yet he cared little for feminine praise. He went about his affairs as soon as his health would permit. A large company of militia had been raised, and Governor Dinwiddie, forced by popular demand, appointed him commander-in-chief

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of the Virginia forces with the rank of Colonel.

But old Mr. Dinwiddie, still foolish and fickle, made Washington's rank seem lower than that of an inferior officer who had been appointed by the crown. This was not only a personal humiliation to the Virginia commander, but it was an insult to all the men under him, if not to the entire province.

After the death of Braddock, Governor Shirley, of Massachusetts, was appointed commander-in-chief of the Colonial armies. In order to prevent further trouble and to avoid future defection in the face of the enemy, Colonel Washington determined to make the journey of five hundred miles to Boston, Shirley's headquarters, and have the question settled once for all.

Standing six feet three in height, erect and handsome, the wealthy young master of Mount Vernon was an attractive personage on this notable journey, which he made on horseback, attended by two *aides* and several colored body-servants.

He was dressed in his buff-and-blue uniform, a scarlet cloak, and sword-knot of red and gold. The Washington arms adorned the accoutre-

George Washington

ments of the horses. His *aides* also were in buff and blue, and the servants followed, wearing the Washington livery of white and scarlet, with hats laced with silver.

Colonel Washington's fame had preceded him, as the chivalrous young envoy and officer of Virginia. His first "Journal" had been widely read at home and abroad. He had fired the first shot and won the victory in the opening battle of what promised to be a long war between the mother country and France. And he had been the hero of Fort Duquesne.

Therefore, he was lionized in Philadelphia, New York, and Boston. While in New York his friend, Beverly Robinson, took him to call upon his sister-in-law, Miss Mary Philipse, reputed to be the wealthiest heiress in America.

It is often related that the dignified Virginia Colonel asked for the hand of the young New York heiress. This is not likely, however. No doubt he paid her several calls and many compliments, but his pressing military engagements did not allow him time to lay siege to that young lady's heart.

Washington was welcomed in Boston, then the largest city in the American colonies. He re-

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mained there ten days, conferring with the Governor, attending the "great and general court" in formal state, and dancing nearly every night at a ball given by a military magnate or a leading citizen of the town.

Governor Shirley's decision was in favor, not only of Washington, but of all Colonial officers and soldiers. The question of rank was now settled and the occasion for friction on that score was fortunately relieved. It was a great victory over an officious inferior named Dagworthy, as well as over Virginia's toadying Governor.

The military chief of the province was not permitted to remain at Mount Vernon among his admiring neighbors and friends. There were rumors of an Indian uprising on the Virginia frontier, and the fear of a French invasion drove men and women in from the outlying settlements.

When the young commander-in-chief was approaching Winchester on horseback he was met by a crowd of men and women who implored his assistance and protection. What he wrote of this occurrence shows a fervent spirit of patriotism which does the highest credit to the

George Washington

heart of a seasoned soldier of twenty-six:

“The supplicating tears of the women,” his letter reads, “and the moving petitions of the men melt me into such deadly sorrow that I solemnly declare, if I know my own mind, I could offer myself a willing sacrifice to the butchering enemy, provided that would contribute to the people’s ease.”

While he was riding to and from Williamsburg, the provincial capital of Virginia, and Winchester, where he had his headquarters for the frontier, he met, one day at dinner, a wealthy and beautiful young widow named Martha Dandridge Custis, who lived on a beautiful estate, called “White House,” on the banks of the Pamunk River.

There was a brief but courtly courtship. Colonel Washington was accepted, and the marriage was to be solemnized as soon as his military business would permit. His great desire was to regain possession of Fort Duquesne, which he, as envoy, had pointed out as a place of great strategic value five years before.

The time now seemed ripe for this decisive move. On his way thither, on the 20th of July,

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1758, shortly after their betrothal, he wrote the following hasty note to his affianced :

“We have begun our march for the Ohio. A courier is starting for Williamsburg, and I embrace the opportunity to send a few words to one whose life is now inseparable from mine.

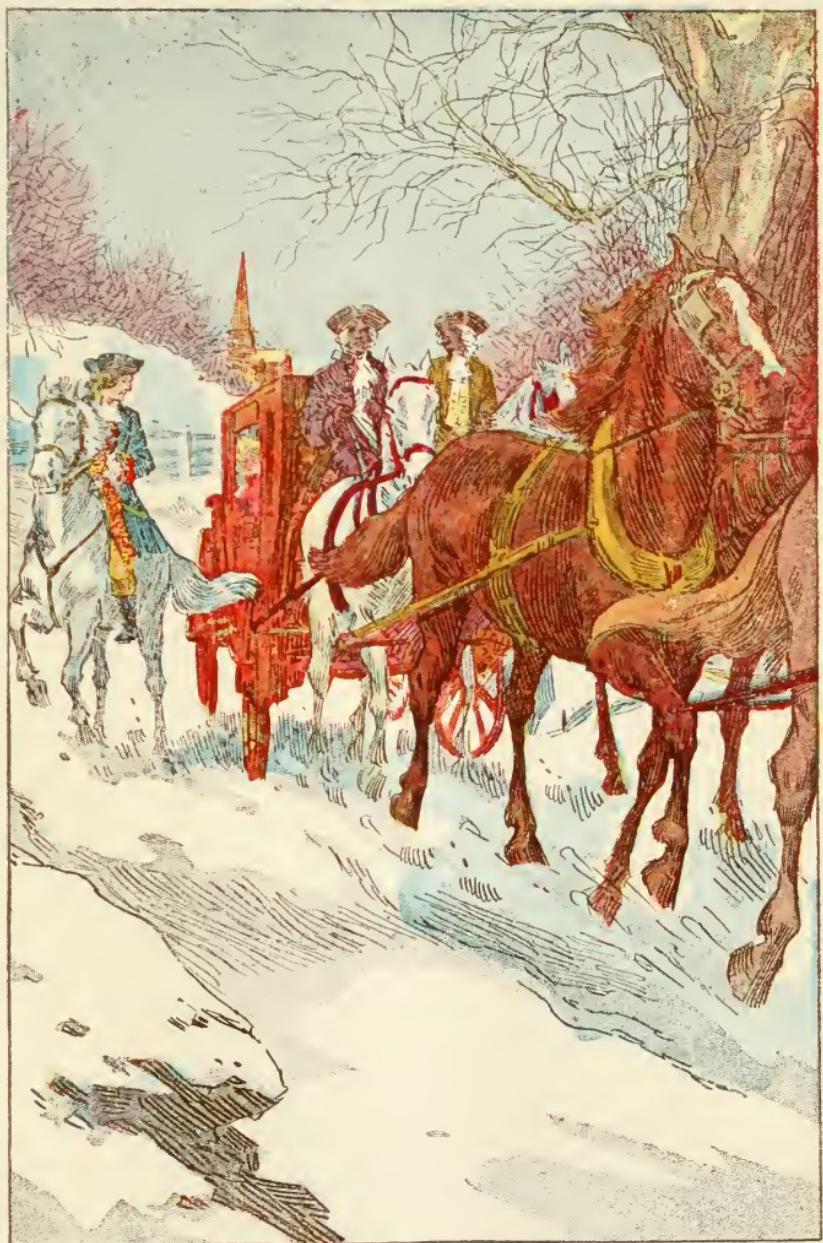
“Since that happy hour when we made our pledges to each other, my thoughts have been continually going to you as another self. That an all-powerful Providence may keep us both in safety is the prayer of your ever faithful and affectionate friend.

“G° WASHINGTON.”

As Colonel Washington and his command approached Fort Duquesne he saw much to remind him of the great disaster of three years before.

Instead of the expected resistance, they found the French fort deserted and destroyed when they reached it, on the 25th of November, 1758, and Washington proceeded to plant the British flag on the charred and still smoking ruins.

The English soon erected another fortification at this point of vantage, which they named Fort Pitt in honor of William Pitt, the brilliant Brit-



YOUNG WASHINGTON'S WEDDING JOURNEY.

George Washington

ish prime minister. After burying the bones of the men who had been killed in the slaughter of Fort Duquesne, they marched back to Virginia in triumph.

Within six weeks the brilliant wedding of the heroic commander-in-chief of Virginia and the wealthiest and most beautiful woman of the colony took place in the little English church near "White House."

The bride was attired, with true Colonial elegance, in silk and satin, brocade and laces, with pearls at her neck and ears. The stately bridegroom appeared in blue and silver, trimmed with scarlet, and with gold buckles at his knees and on his shoes.

After the ceremony the soldier bridegroom rode beside the bride's coach-and-six mounted on a splendid horse, and followed by the gentlemen of the wedding party. It was a happy home-coming to sightly Mount Vernon, with its stately elms and verandas overlooking the Potomac.

Colonel Washington's days as a frontier fighter were over, and he was now settled among the Fairfaxes, Masons, Lees, Carys, and other congenial neighbors to live the easy comfortable

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life of a Virginia planter, and he often went fox-hunting with his old friend, Lord Fairfax, and other lovers of the sport.

Colonel Washington was at once elected to the Virginia House of Burgesses, the first representative lawmaking body in America. On one of the first days of his attendance on that august assemblage, about three months after his marriage, Mr. Robinson, the Speaker of the House, thanked him eloquently for his signal services to his country.

Washington rose to reply, but, unable to talk about himself, stood blushing and stammering—until the Speaker came to his relief by saying:

“Sit down, Mr. Washington. Your modesty equals your valor, and that surpasses the power of any language I possess.”

CHAPTER XV

GEORGE WASHINGTON, ESQ., FARMER

AFTER his eventful youth and young manhood, during which he suffered many hardships and had some thrilling adventures and narrow

George Washington

escapes, Mr. Washington, benedict and planter, was well prepared to enjoy a quiet and prosperous life as a member of one of the "First Families of Virginia."

George Washington's fortune, through good management, had increased with the years. He had succeeded in the management of his inherited estate, as he had done with every other venture in life from the time he began earning a livelihood as a surveyor, and became the standby of his widowed mother.

George had known what it was to be poor, but wealth had not changed him, and his simplicity and modesty were as marked now as they had always been in those earlier days. So, when he had married the wealthy widow of Daniel Parke Custis and added her great estates to his own, Colonel Washington became one of the richest men in America.

With her fortune Mrs. Custis brought to Mount Vernon her two children, John Parke and Martha Parke Custis. "Jacky," as they called the boy, was six years old, and "Patsy" four.

These were the only children George Wash-

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ington ever had—except, many years later, by adoption. He became his wife's children's guardian as well as their stepfather. He cared for them and loved them as his own. In his ample, dignified correspondence with merchants and agents in London, Mr. Washington gravely ordered:

“Ten shillings’ worth of toys;” “six little books for children beginning to read;” “one fashionably dressed baby to cost ten shillings;” “one fashionably dressed doll to cost a guinea;” “a box of gingerbread toys and sugar images or comfits;” “a Bible and Prayer Book” (for each child) “neatly bound in Turkey,” with names “in gilt letters on the inside of the cover;” and “one very good spinet”—the piano of that day.

Of his life at Mount Vernon, the proprietor wrote:

“I am now fixed at this seat with an agreeable consort for life, and hope to find more happiness in retirement than I ever experienced in the wide and bustling world.”

He was a kind, indulgent stepfather. It seems strange to think now of the Father of his Country acting as a commonplace father of a family. But it gave him the keenest pleasure to look

George Washington

after the health and comfort of his household, including the slaves, of which there were many, belonging to the Custis estate.

Poor little Martha became an invalid. When she was thirteen she was seized with convulsions, and her stepfather did all he could for her—taking her away to the Warm Springs. He also took “Jacky” to the Rev. Jonathan Boucher, who tutored him in his home at Annapolis.

The young daughter received but little benefit from camping out at the Springs, and had to be taken home, where, as her fond stepfather wrote of her:

“She was seized with one of her usual fits and expired in it, in less than two minutes, without uttering a word, or groan or scarce a sigh. It is an easier matter to conceive than to describe the distress of this family.”

Jack was sent to King’s, now Columbia College, New York. Mr. Washington, who placed him there, regretted having taken him away from the lonely mother, after the death of Martha. So he sent for Jack, who was only too glad to come home, after three months of college life, for he was soon married, at the age of nineteen, to Miss Nelly Calvert, to whom his mother wrote this

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letter to be handed to the bride just after the ceremony:

“MY DEAR NELLY: God took from me a daughter when June roses were blooming. He has now given me another daughter about her age, when winter winds are blowing, to warm my heart again. I am as happy as one so afflicted and so blest can be. Pray receive my benediction, and a wish that you may long live the loving wife of my happy son, and a loving daughter of

“Your affectionate mother,

“M. WASHINGTON.”

The master of Mount Vernon was a careful manager. His daily rounds of the plantation covered a ride, on horseback, of fifteen miles. He required strict obedience and industry of all in his employ. Beside the ordinary crops raised by a Virginia farmer, there was a mill on the place, and it was said that George Washington’s brand on a barrel of flour was the highest recommendation of its quality abroad as well as at home.

Though he was an indulgent father and uncle, a genial and hospitable neighbor and a faithful

George Washington

church warden, Mr. George Washington was not to be imposed upon. One day he saw a man, who had been warned off his premises, shooting ducks in one of the creeks on his plantation. He started after the fellow, who got into a boat, pushed out from the shore and aimed his fowling-piece at his pursuer.

The indignant owner of Mount Vernon rode right into the water after the scapegrace, pulled the boat ashore, took away the man's gun and gave him a good thrashing!

Before Mr. Washington was thirty he was afflicted with an affection of the lungs, and it was feared that he would be a victim to consumption as his brother Lawrence had been. He camped out at Warm Springs, upon the mountains, and soon returned home greatly benefited, though he was hollow-chested all his life.

Because of his dignity and decorum it has been thought that Washington was lacking in sense of humor, but this letter to a connection who had recently been made the happy father of a baby boy, disproves that mistaken notion:

“DEAR SIR: I was favored with your epistle, written on a certain 25th of

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July, when you ought to have been at church praying as becomes every good Christian man who has as much to answer for as you have.

“But harkee! I am told you have lately introduced into your family a certain production which you are lost in admiration of, and spend so much time in contemplating the just proportions of its parts that it is thought you will have little time to animadvert upon the prospect of your crops, &c., at a time when our growing property is assailed by every villainous worm that has had an existence since the days of Noah—how unkind it was of Noah, now I have mentioned his name, to suffer such a brood of vermin to get a berth in the Ark!—but perhaps you may be as well off as we are—

“Dear sir, your most affectionate and obedient

“G^o WASHINGTON.

“P. S.—Don’t forget to make my compliments to Mrs. Bassett, Miss ‘Dudy,’ and the little ones, for Miss ‘Dudy’ cannot be classed with small people without offering her great injustice.”

George Washington

“Miss ‘Dudy’ ” was a neighbor’s little daughter Judy, who had beaten a boy larger than herself in a wrestling match.

The earliest and fullest description of Washington was written by a friend, George Mercer, in 1760, before “the Colonel” was thirty:

“He may be described as being straight as an Indian, measuring six feet two inches in his stockings, and weighing one hundred and seventy-five pounds when he took his seat in the House of Burgesses in 1759.

“His frame is padded with well developed muscles, indicating great strength. His bones and joints are large, as are his feet and hands. He is wide-shouldered, but has not a deep or round chest; is neat waisted, but is broad across the hips, and has rather long legs and arms.

“His head is well shaped, though not large, but is gracefully poised on a superb neck. A large and straight rather than a prominent nose; blue-gray, penetrating eyes, which are widely separated and overhung by a heavy brow. His face is long rather than broad, with high, round cheek-bones, and terminates in a good, firm chin.

“He has a clear, though rather a colorless, pale skin, which burns with the sun. A pleas-

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ing, benevolent, though rather commanding, countenance, dark brown hair which he wears in a queue.

“His mouth is large and generally firmly closed, but which, from time to time, discloses some defective teeth. His features are regular and placid, though flexible and expressive of deep feeling when moved by emotion. In conversation he looks you full in the face, is deliberate, deferential and engaging.

“His demeanor at all times composed and dignified. His movements and gestures are graceful, his walk majestic, and he is a splendid horseman.”

In 1772, while on a tour inspecting some of his land in the Kanawha region of western Virginia, Mr. Washington was hailed by some Indians who invited the whole party to the lodge of their grand sachem. On the arrival of the white men, the chief received them with great dignity, and, after seating them around the council fire, delivered the following speech in remembrance of the great battle with Braddock, the British general:

“I am a chief, and the ruler over many tribes. My influence extends to the waters of the Great Lakes and to the far blue mountains. I have

George Washington

traveled a long and a weary path that I might see the young warrior of the great battle. It was on the day that the white man's blood mixed with the streams of our forest, that I first beheld this chief.

"I called to my young men and said, 'Mark yon tall and daring warrior; he is not of the red-coat tribe; he hath an Indian's wisdom, and his warriors fight as well; himself alone is exposed. Quick, let your aim be certain and he dies!'

"Our rifles were leveled—rifles which, but for him, knew not how to miss. 'Twas all in vain; a power, mightier far than we, shielded him from harm. He cannot die in battle. I am old, and shall soon be gathered to the great council-fire of my fathers in the land of the shades; but ere I go, there is a something bids me speak in the voice of prophecy.

"Listen! The Great Spirit protects that man and guides his destinies. He will become the chief of nations, and a people yet unborn will hail him as the founder of a mighty empire."

Colonel Washington could not help laughing at the idea that he would be the "founder of a mighty empire," but the old chief's prophecy made a profound impression on all the others,

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CHAPTER XVI

MUTTERINGS OF AN APPROACHING STORM

IN 1765 the Stamp Act was passed in England. This law required that certain articles sold to the colonists should be stamped, and the stamps paid for by the purchasers. The people refused to pay this tax. Dr. Franklin, then living in England as the representative of several American colonies, wrote home:

“The sun of liberty is set; you must light up the candles of industry and economy.”

His correspondent replied that he was afraid “other lights would be the consequence.” This soon came to pass. Some of the colonies were already fired with rage. This flamed up into popular indignation which spread from place to place, and from colony to colony, like a prairie fire. So widespread was the heat of this passion against the power imposing the unjust tax, that it was repealed and another imposed in 1767. This was levied on paints, paper, glass and tea.

George Washington

The colonies refused to purchase the taxed commodities from the mother country. Mr. Washington wrote to his agents in London not to send him any taxed article. The banding together of the people in America not to use anything that had been taxed "spelt ruin" for many English manufacturers and merchants. They combined their clamor with that of the colonies, and the tax was removed from everything but tea, on which the duty was reduced to three pence (six cents) a pound.

This did not pacify the people of the American colonies. It was not the amount of the tax, they said, but the principle involved. If they admitted the right of England to tax them at all, it would prove only the entering wedge to greater imposts later. To the American mind any impost was an imposition.

The people were roused to a frenzy. Tax-gatherers were regarded as outcasts—hated as the publicans were by the Jews in the time of the Christ. They were stoned, abused, tarred and feathered, and threatened with hanging. As usual with the people when aroused, they gave vent to their wrath in songs. Here is part of a long ballad which expressed the popular feeling:

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“There was an old lady lived over the sea,
And she was an island queen;
Her daughter lived off in a new coun-tree
With an ocean of water between.

“The old lady’s pockets were full of gold,
But never contented was she—
So she called on her daughter to pay her a tax
Of threepence a pound on her tea.

“‘Now, Mother, dear Mother,’ the daughter replied,
‘I shan’t do the thing you “ax”;
I’m willing to pay a fair price for your tea,
But never a threepenny tax.’ ”

This was no empty threat. The colonists suited the action to the word. They forbade the unloading of the tea ships in New York and Philadelphia, and sent them back to England. In Charleston they received the chests and stored them in damp cellars, where the tea soon spoiled.

In Boston some members of a patriotic organ-

George Washington

ization called "The Sons of Liberty," led by Paul Revere, disguised themselves as Indians one night, and boarded the ships waiting in the harbor to unload their precious cargo. They threw out the chests or emptied the tea overboard.

The ballad, already quoted, closed with the Colonial daughter calling out to Mother England:

"You may have your tea when it's steeped
quite enough!"

This outbreak was known as "The Boston Tea Party." Lawless though it was, nearly all of the colonies approved of it, as if it were something heroic. But in England it seemed criminal, for it was not the government, but the tea merchants, who suffered the great loss. The course pursued by the authorities of New York and Philadelphia was more just and dignified than the wicked waste of the tea in Boston and Charleston.

As a punishment for this outbreak the British government passed the Port Bill, closing the harbor of Boston to keep the lawbreaking people of that city from receiving supplies. Boston was thus in a state of siege, and when the embargo was prolonged, its people were threatened with starvation.

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This Act aroused the wrath of all the colonies, and the neighbor provinces sent provisions and other supplies to the beleaguered town. Soldiers had been sent from England to keep the inhabitants under control. These were commanded by a stupid, brutal officer—General Gage.

In Virginia, the colony always considered in closest sympathy with the mother country, the indignation rose to the highest pitch. Mr. Washington (attention was now paid to the fact that he was an officer under the crown, Colonel Washington) was in accord with the general disapproval of England's harsh and oppressive measures.

In the Virginia House of Burgesses, a fiery young man, named Patrick Henry, made the wonderful appeal familiar to every schoolboy, beginning with—

“The war has actually begun. The next gale that sweeps from the north will bring to our ears the clash of resounding arms,”

and closing with—

“Give me liberty, or give me death!”

George Washington

In the course of this speech Henry was bold enough to shout:

“Cæsar had his Brutus, Charles the First his Cromwell, and George the Third”—

Here the speaker was interrupted with cries of “Treason!” “Treason!”

“And George the Third,” he continued, “may profit by their example. If this be treason, make the most of it!”

Mr. Washington wrote to his tory friend, Bryan Fairfax:

“Has not General Gage’s conduct been more becoming a Turkish bashaw than an English governor? Has not this exhibited an unexampled testimony of the most despotic system of tyranny that ever was practised in a free government? Shall we, after this, whine and cry for relief when we have already tried it in vain? Or shall we supinely sit and see one province after another fall a sacrifice to despotism?”

Virginia heroes met at Richmond and drafted a remonstrance to the king, asking him to consider that “from our sovereign there can be but one appeal.”

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What that appeal might be was voiced in another impassioned utterance by Patrick Henry:

“We must fight! I repeat it, sir, we must fight! An appeal to arms and the God of Hosts is all that is left us.”

At Williamsburg again, in the House of Burgesses, a report was received concerning the state of affairs in starving, insulted, oppressed Boston. Mr. Washington was a silent man, but the recital of English outrages in that city roused his indignation. He rose and made this brief but eloquent speech:

“I will raise a thousand men, subsist them at my own expense and march them to the relief of Boston.”

He was chosen one of the six Virginia delegates to the Continental Congress to be held in the State House (afterward known as Independence Hall), Philadelphia.

To one friend, Colonel Washington wrote:

“An innate sense of freedom first told me that the measures” (of the British government) “are opposed to every principle of natural justice.”

And to another he added:

“This you may at the same time rely on, that

George Washington

none of them" (the colonies) "will ever submit to the loss of their valuable rights and privileges."

On the day of his election as delegate to the Continental Congress, George Washington wrote:

"DEAR BROTHER JACK:

"It is my full intention to devote my life and fortune to the cause we are engaged in, if needful!"

CHAPTER XVII

GENERAL WASHINGTON, COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

THE men of Virginia met the men of Massachusetts and other colonies in the second Continental Congress. (The first had been held in Carpenter's Hall, Philadelphia.) The second was convened in the building, in the same city, now called Independence Hall.

John Hancock, a little man in a red suit, the merchant prince from Boston, occupied the chair. John Adams, older than the rest, known

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as "the Father of the Revolution," was there. Thomas Jefferson, Patrick Henry and Richard Henry Lee—the friend whom the boy George Washington addressed, in his letters, "Dear Dickey"—were from Virginia.

The North and the South had begun to find already that their interests were competing. The battles of Lexington and Concord had just been fought, and it was known that an army would have to be raised from all the provinces. Many men had shouldered their muskets and gone to Boston. "Who shall be general?" was the question before the Congress. There were several candidates from Massachusetts. General Artemas Ward was a great favorite, while rich little John Hancock is said to have aspired to that honor.

Patrick Henry was energetic, eloquent and influential. Early in the convention he seemed to recognize the rival interests of the colonies, and announced to his fellow-delegates:

"I am not a Virginian; I am an American!"

Colonel Washington was there in his officer's uniform. This showed that he expected to fight, "if needful," as he had written to his favorite brother. It may be his wife had encouraged him

George Washington

in this. A relative had written to her about the folly of her husband in allowing himself to be drawn in to act with riotous rebels, for, if they did not succeed, they would be arrested as traitors to the crown, and probably hanged or beheaded on Tyburn Hill, the place of execution in London. But Mrs. Washington bravely wrote back:

“My mind is made up; my heart is in the cause. George is right; he is always right.”

After much discussion, during which one delegate moved to write another letter of protest to the king—but others exclaimed:

“What good will that do? Haven’t we written letters enough? Let’s *do* something!”

When nominations were made for commander-in-chief of the Continental Army, old John Adams arose to speak.

Colonel Washington kept himself in the background. He made no speeches in the Congress, but he was influential in council. He was always surrounded by delegates who wished to consult him. When the old man of Massachusetts took the floor they all grew quiet, for he had evidently risen to nominate General Artemas Ward.

All listened respectfully, as he described the

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qualities and fitness of his candidate whom he did not name until the end of his speech. Then he raised his voice until there reverberated through the hall:

“I nominate *George Washington of Virginia!*”

Colonel Washington jumped up as if he had been shot, and rushed out of the hall into the library. When he was elected, a committee was sent to notify the *General* of his election to the supreme command.

In spite of his wife's expressed approval, General Washington's first thought was of her loneliness and sorrow during the long separation. Within two years she had been bereaved of her daughter, and her son had gone away to a home of his own. So, instead of exulting because of the high honor thrust upon him, he wrote his wife as follows:

“I am now set down to write you on a subject which fills me with inexpressible concern, and this concern is greatly aggravated and increased when I reflect upon the uneasiness I know it will give you. It has been determined in Con-

George Washington

gress that the whole army raised for the defense of the American cause shall be put under my care, and that it is necessary for me to proceed immediately to Boston to take upon me the command of it.

“You may believe me, my dear Patsy, when I tell you in the most solemn manner that, so far from seeking this appointment, I have used every endeavor in my power to avoid it, not only from my unwillingness to part from you and the family, but from a consciousness of its being a trust too great for my capacity, and that I should enjoy more real happiness in one month with you at home, than I have the most distant prospect of finding abroad, if my stay were to be seven times seven years.

“I shall feel no pain from the toil and dangers of the campaign; my unhappiness will flow from the uneasiness I know you will feel from being left alone.”

There was nothing in this letter about his own sacrifice in leaving home, fortune and happiness, for the risks of an arch-rebel. The doings of the Congress were kept secret. The names of those

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who made speeches and motions were not recorded in its minutes, lest a price be set on those brave men's heads by the British government.

General Washington's commission as commander-in-chief was signed on June 19th, 1775, the day he was elected. Two days later he started for Boston. On the way he met a messenger hurrying to Philadelphia, with news of the battle of Bunker Hill which had taken place on June 17th. The new commander's greatest anxiety was as to how the provincial soldiers had fought. He asked the "express:"

"Did they stand the fire of the regular troops?"

"That they did," was the messenger's reply, "and held their own fire in reserve until the enemy was within eight rods."

"Then the liberties of the country are safe!" exclaimed General Washington fervently.

Three battles had recently been fought around Boston. Therefore, as he approached the seat of war, he found the people even more excited than in Virginia. It was on Monday, the 3d of July—the 4th was not yet a red-letter day in the calendar of heroism—when General George Washington entered the pasture known as Cam-

George Washington

bridge Common, where the Continental army was drawn up, about half a mile from headquarters, and surrounded by a crowd of people in carriages, wagons and on foot. Riding beneath a spreading elm with his escort, he wheeled his horse, drew his sword, and waved it in saluting the assembled army as the sign of assuming command.

A friend has described General Washington's appearance when he took charge that day:

"He was forty-three years old—just as old as Julius Cæsar was when he took command of the army in Gaul and made himself great. Just as old as Napoleon when he made the mistake of his life and declared war against Russia.

"But how different from these two conquerors was George Washington! What they did for love of power, he did for love of liberty.

"A gallant soldier he was, under the Cambridge elm that warm July morning; he was what we call an imposing figure. He was tall, stalwart and erect, with thick brown hair drawn back into a queue, as all gentlemen then wore it, with a rosy face and a clear, bright eye—a strong, a healthy, a splendid-looking man in his uniform of blue and buff, an epaulet on each

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shoulder, and, in his three-cornered hat, the cockade of liberty.

“And the commander-in-chief of the Continental army looked upon the army of which he had assumed command, and determined to make soldiers of them and lead them on to final victory.”

CHAPTER XVIII

“UNDER TWO FLAGS”

IF they were not ragged regiments that the new commander had in his so-called army, they were a motley crowd—no two companies dressing alike—except the men of Rhode Island, commanded by Nathanael Greene, the Quaker general. This was a regiment of real soldiers, properly uniformed and equipped with arms, tents and other accoutrements. The men from Virginia wore Indian leggings and other garments of backwoodsmen and pioneers, as if they were now out on a hunting expedition. As for the rest, they were like the children’s counting-out lingo :

George Washington

“Rich man, poor man,
Beggar man, thief;
Doctor, lawyer,
Indian chief;
Tinker, tailor,
Soldier, sailor,
Ragman, bagman”—

and all the rest of the rigmarole—with the addition of farmers and “all sorts and conditions of men,” except soldiers in uniform.

It was more like a mob of men than an army. These raw recruits the commander found to be “many men of many minds.” Instead of having any idea of discipline, each seemed to consider himself “a law unto himself.” Many of them appeared to have volunteered as if they were joining a club or a party, and believed they could leave as they had come—at their own pleasure!

It was their idea of liberty—that no one should have authority over them to make them do anything they did not wish. Some claimed to have political influence, and therefore felt at liberty to come and go as they pleased.

With all this, they were brave and patriotic, “according to their lights,” and General Washington could not help admiring them. “Genius

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is the ability to take great pains.” The new commander developed genius, if he did not have it before, during the siege of Boston. He manifested great patience with the men, but he wrote to a friend that he had to make “a slam among the officers.”

He asked Congress for ten thousand cheap hunting-shirts of one color and pattern which might look uniform. The rivalry between men from different colonies sometimes provoked quarrels. One day, as the General was riding by, he saw some soldiers from Massachusetts brawling with a group of Virginians.

Leaping from his horse and throwing the rein to a groom, he dashed among the rioters, knocked them right and left, and, seizing the two ringleaders by their throats, he shook them both vigorously, while he delivered them all a lecture upon their unsoldierlike conduct.

In time he got the recruits into some semblance of discipline, when it was discovered that, through a gross error, there were but a few pounds of gunpowder on hand. Sending a sloop to Bermuda, where it was understood that there was powder to be seized, and Colonel Knox to Ticonderoga for cannon as well as ammunition,

George Washington

he kept the terrible secret sealed in his own breast. He dared not tell even the confidential members of his staff what a terrible fix they were in, lest the British in Boston should find out that he could not defend himself against an attack.

But he kept the men digging and building intrenchments to carry on a prolonged siege. For this they needed neither ammunition nor uniforms. General Washington won as often by the use of the pick and spade as by the sword and bayonet.

General Gage, fortunately for the colonists' cause, satisfied himself with personal insults and threats against "Washington the arch-traitor," and tirades against "that rebel rabble called the Continental army."

General Washington patiently replied—always dignified, always the gentleman—to Gage's threats:

"If you hang any of our men who fall into your hands, I will do the same to as many British prisoners in our possession."

This was a kind of warfare that he was able to wage without powder and ball, and the commander of the Continentals must have smiled

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within himself, as he thought how harmless such attacks were, while the admirably equipped scarlet-coated soldiers were waiting in Boston, useless and helpless, when they might have dispersed the besieging rabble at a single stroke, if they had only known!

General Gage was a specimen of the domineering, blundering, insulting generals and governors the English crown had sent over to rule over and regulate the colonists. Gage was a fitting representative of George the Third and his arrogant advisers. But for such stupid officials, the colonies would never have revolted. The taxes laid on them by the crown were not burdensome, considering the times and circumstances. They were levied to pay the expense of the French and Indian war, in which all the colonies were deeply concerned, and for which the British sent an army with another overbearing and obstinate general, Braddock, who met the fate he, but not his red regulars, deserved, in spite of the appeals of his youthful *aide*, Major Washington.

George Washington was a truthful boy and man, but he believed in misleading the British. The secret of the dearth of powder leaked out

George Washington

among the Continentals, but measures were taken to keep the enemy from finding it out.

A man walking about the "works" of the colonists noticed many heavy powder-barrels. He said he was glad to observe that the army was so well supplied with gunpowder. The General smiled at this remark, for those barrels were filled with sand to deceive the British, if any of their spies should be prying about.

Some of the farmers' wives made saltpeter for the army, so that a small quantity of gunpowder could be produced. Of this the General was very careful. Without revealing the fact that his army had almost none, he wrote urging Congress to scour the country for more, adding:

"No quantity, however small, is beneath notice."

And when he had gathered a limited supply, he instructed his officers that what was doled out to them must be used only when, as he told them with a smile, "the red-coat gentry please to step out of their intrenchments."

The commander-in-chief was surprised to notice that the British were laying in a large supply of fuel, as if preparing to spend the winter in Boston! This gave him courage that the

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sloop could return from Bermuda, and Knox could get back from Ticonderoga, in time to save the day for the colonists.

The British soldiers in the besieged town were amusing themselves with plays which, though produced by themselves in the theater, had all the personal interest of private theatricals. One farce, which gave the British no little amusement, entitled "The Blockade of Boston," was written by Major André, a brilliant young officer, who was very popular with the English.

The American army, encamped outside Boston, while these entertainments were going on within, suffered for shelter and clothing. The time for which they had enlisted began to expire, and General Washington had many trials and difficulties of which the ordinary commander is totally ignorant.

Meanwhile General Gage had become so disagreeable to his own officers and men, that influences were used to bring about his removal. Also, the new English prime minister appointed General William Howe to the command in Boston. As General Howe happened to be a gentleman, he was a different sort of man from Gage, and the Continentals, hearing of the

George Washington

change, began to expect that something would be done at once. A cannonading of the nearest points held by the Americans was kept up, but without special result. As his men whose time expired left the ranks, General Washington bought their arms and other equipments. Even then there were not enough guns to go around among the rest!

Early in November Mrs. Washington came to Cambridge to visit her husband at headquarters, which a hundred years later became doubly famous as the home of the poet Longfellow.

During the long trial of his patience and fortitude, General Washington saw, from an upper window, stout, jolly General Putnam, who was familiarly known as "Old Put," approaching on horseback, with a huge fat woman riding astride behind him. It was such a travesty upon a doughty knight "flying" with his lady love, that the General laughed till the tears ran down his cheeks. But when General Putnam and the "plump" lady arrived, the commanding general was a model of gravity and decorum.

It turned out that the woman was suspected of carrying messages between a spying minister,

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the Reverend Benjamin Church, to the British in Boston; but "Old Put's" mode of bringing in his prisoner was too much for General Washington's keen sense of propriety.

Better days came while the Winter was yet young. The ten thousand hunting-shirts arrived, and, later, a large quantity of powder from the West Indies. Also a brave Continental shipmaster captured a British ship, with a huge mortar for throwing shells, among the spoils. Then Knox returned with cannon from Lake George, on fifty sledges drawn by eighty yoke of oxen. Now, with plenty of ammunition, fifty cannon and a big mortar, it seemed possible to bombard Boston with a fair prospect of success.

About this time something of the highest import came to pass, but of which was little thought at the time. Dr. Benjamin Franklin and two other gentlemen arrived from the Congress, still in session in Philadelphia, to inspect the work of the new commander-in-chief, and discuss methods of besieging and capturing Boston. They brought a new flag having thirteen red and white stripes, for the thirteen colonies struggling for their rights. In the field, or canton, in the cor-

George Washington

ner, were the crosses of St. George and St. Andrew, which form the British "union jack."

This banner was called the Grand Union Flag of the American colonies. It did not mean that they were fighting for independence or separation from the mother country, but that they were demanding their rights as loyal subjects of the king of England.

This flag was raised on New Year's Day, 1776, at the headquarters of the Continental army. The British, seeing their union jack in the "rebel" standard, inferred that the Americans had been so terrified by a "king's speech," which had just been printed and distributed, that they were going to yield after all. Of this misunderstanding General Washington wrote to his military secretary (who happened to be absent at the time of the re-enlistment of most of the Continental army) :

"We are at length favored with a sight of his majesty's most gracious speech, breathing sentiments of tenderness and compassion for his deluded American subjects!"

[This proclamation was a silly, patronizing tirade against the rebels, threatening them with his royal wrath, and promising to hang such

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ringleaders as Washington, Franklin and others whom Americans now almost idolize as the noblest patriots of all history.]

“The speech I send you. A volume [bundle] of them was sent out by the Boston gentry; and, farcical enough, we gave great joy to them without knowing or intending it; for, on that day, the day which gave being to the new army (but before the proclamation came to hand) we had hoisted the Union flag in compliment to the United Colonies.

“But behold! it was received in Boston as a token of the deep impression the speech had made upon us, and as a signal of submission. So we hear, by a person out of Boston last night. By this time, I presume, they begin to think it strange that we have not made a formal surrender of our lives.”

Of his struggles and hardships, the Commander wrote to his absent secretary:

“My own situation is so irksome to me at times that if I did not consult the public good more than my tranquillity, I should long ere this have put everything on the cast of a die. So far from having an army of twenty thousand men, well armed, I have been here with less than half

George Washington

that number, including sick, furloughed, and on command: and those neither armed nor clothed as they should be. In short, my situation has been such, that I have been obliged to use art to conceal it from my own officers."

As the time approached for "the cast of the die," and he had begun to fortify Dorchester Heights, commanding the city, the American general tried to instil the minds of his men with the solemn work they were engaged in, by prohibiting the playing of cards and other games of chance.

This order read:

"At this time of public distress, men may find enough to do in the service of God and their country without abandoning themselves to vice and immorality.

"It is a noble cause we are engaged in; it is the cause of virtue and mankind; every advantage and comfort, to us and our posterity, depend on the vigor of our exertions; in short, freedom or slavery must be the result of our conduct; there can therefore, be no greater inducement to men to behave well.

"But it may not be amiss to the troops to know that, if any man in action shall presume

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to skulk, hide himself, or retreat from the enemy without the orders of his commanding officer, he will be instantly shot down as an example of cowardice; cowards having too frequently disconcerted the best troops by their dastardly behavior.”

The 4th of March, 1776, was the date for occupying Dorchester Heights. The attack upon Boston was promptly begun, and the British batteries replied with spirit. While this cannonading was going on, the wife of old John Adams, who had nominated George Washington for commander-in-chief, wrote to her husband at the Congress, from their home in the neighborhood of Dorchester:

“I have been in a constant state of anxiety since you left me. It has been said ‘to-morrow’ and ‘to-morrow’ for this month, but when the dreadful to-morrow will be, I know not——

“But hark! The house this instant shakes with the roar of cannon. I have been close to the door, and find it is a cannonade from our army. Orders, I find, are come, for all the remaining militia to repair to the lines Monday night, by twelve o’clock. No sleep for me tonight!”

George Washington

Next day Mrs. Adams continued her writing:

"I went to bed after twelve, but got no rest; the cannon continued firing, and my heart kept pace with them all night. We had a pretty quiet day, but what to-morrow will bring forth, God only knows!"

On Monday she finished her letter:

"I have just returned from Penn's Hill, where I have been sitting to hear the amazing roar of cannon, and from whence I could see every shell that was thrown. The sound, I think, is one of the grandest in nature, and is of the true species of the sublime. 'Tis now an incessant roar; but oh, the fatal ideas which are connected with the sound! How many of our dear countrymen must fall!

"I went to bed about twelve, and rose again a little after one. I could no more sleep than if I had been in the engagement; the rattling of the windows, the jar of the house, and the continued roar of twenty-four pounders, and the bursting of shells, give us such ideas, and realize a scene to us of which we could scarcely form any conception.

"I hope to give you joy of Boston, *even if it is in ruins*, before I send this away."

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Inside of the besieged town a British officer recorded the astonishment of all inside the city:

“This morning at daybreak we discovered two redoubts on Dorchester Point, and two smaller ones on their flanks. They were all raised during last night with an expedition equal to that of the *genii* belonging to Aladdin’s wonderful lamp. From these hills they command the whole town, so that we must drive them from their posts or desert the place.”

General Howe gazed up through the fog at the fortifications which had sprung up in the night like giant mushrooms. After a low, ominous whistle, he burst out with—

“The rebels have done more work in one night than my whole army would have done in one month!”

General Washington rode about to encourage his men to do their utmost. He reminded them that the day was the sixth anniversary of the massacre of Boston citizens by British troops. The time was now come, he told them, to avenge the slaughter of their brothers. They answered him with shouts of impatience to begin the attack.

George Washington

In spite of all this, the British soldiery could not believe that the rebels were capable of real courage or sustained effort in fighting. They thought there might be brilliant minds among the Americans, to plan great things, but they considered the colonial farmers like the stupid peasantry in England and on the continent of Europe.

Still intent on “fiddling while Rome is burning,” the British soldiers could not even then give up their petty theatricals. They and their ladies assembled in the chief theater to witness a burlesque in which General Washington was shown as Don Quixote, with an *aide* as Sancho Panza, carrying blunderbusses seven feet long, wearing absurd uniforms, followed by a ragged rabble armed with brooms, pitchforks and other farm tools.

This farce was broken up by a Continental shell striking the building!

“Ah! then and there was hurrying to
and fro,
And gathering tears, and tremblings
of distress.”

The soldiers themselves stamped like the

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burlesque mob they had just been laughing at, and fled to the British fleet in Boston harbor.

The next day, March 17th, 1776, General Washington and his army entered the city, and found that it had been vacated during the night.

Of this the General wrote to Congress:

“General Howe’s retreat was precipitate beyond anything I could have conceived. The destruction of the stores at Dunbar’s camp, after Braddock’s defeat, was but a faint image of what may be seen at Boston; artillery carts cut to pieces at one place, gun carriages in another; shells broke here, shots buried there, and everything carrying with it the face of disorder and confusion, as also of distress.”

It was natural that the General should compare this fighting *against* the red “regulars” with the time when he, as a young major, was *with* them in defeat, though he saved the day and many of the British soldiers from death, twenty years before. But did he think of the time when he came there (as the dashing young colonel, he captured Boston, socially, by captivating it) to settle the question of the rank of colonial officers being equal to those appointed by the king?

George Washington

When he entered Boston after the British evacuation, he chose the best "tavern in the town" for his headquarters. It is not surprising that General Howe had done the same thing. While taking formal possession and raising the new Flag of the United Colonies over the city—it was the first American standard to float over Boston town—General Washington saw at the inn a little girl running about, interested in all that was going on. Being very fond of children, he enjoyed taking the child on his knee and talking with her. To see what she would say he asked her:

"Now that you have seen the soldiers on both sides, which do you like the best?"

Children will tell the truth even under the most trying circumstances. George Washington is said to have had some experience in that line himself! So the little girl spoke up:

"I like the 'red-coats' best."

The General could not help laughing at her honesty, but he said quietly:

"Yes, my dear, the 'red-coats' do look the best, but it takes the ragged boys to do the fighting."

Of course, General George had to write to

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“dear brother Jack” about his victory at Boston, and tell him what he could never have written to any one else, since his wife was with him at the time:

“I believe I may with great truth affirm that no man, perhaps, since the first institution of armies, ever commanded one under more difficult circumstances than I have done. To enumerate the particulars would fill a volume.”

In spite of all General Washington’s obstacles and privations, during the long siege of Boston, he had to plan at the same time for the defense of New York, against which city he had heard the English general, Henry Clinton, was now proceeding. He had sent General Charles Lee (whose military training had been among the British regulars) to oppose Clinton when he came.

General Howe’s fleet (in which there were so many ships that it was said to resemble “a forest of masts” while waiting in Boston harbor) sailed away toward Nova Scotia. The American commander well knew that a formidable fleet like that would soon be back again—probably to capture New York. Therefore, as soon as he could arrange affairs in Boston, he fol-

George Washington

lowed his poor little army, which had been sent on ahead to New York, then the third city in size in America—Philadelphia being the first, and Boston the second. But it was difficult, if not impossible, to hold New York against British warships, which could surround it on three sides.

Of his second in command, George Washington had written to his brother Jack:

“General Charles Lee is the first officer, in military knowledge and experience, we have in the whole army. He is zealously attached to the cause, honest and well-meaning, but rather fickle and violent, I fear, in his temper. However, as he possesses an uncommon share of good sense and spirit, I congratulate my countrymen upon his appointment to that department.”

The commanding general had his family with him on the journey to New York—not only Mrs. Washington, but Jack Custis, who was a member of his stepfather’s staff, and his young wife. Soon after their arrival on the new field of action, President Hancock, of the Continental Congress, invited General and Mrs. Washington to become his guests in Philadelphia, in order to consult the commander-in-chief about

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the grave matters upon which the delegates were then deliberating. Many of them had been driven desperate by overbearing British officials sent by the king and his counselors, down to the fawning taxgatherers. So they had come to the conclusion that the only way to get their rights and liberties as free Englishmen was to help themselves. To do this they decided that they must cut loose from the mother country. She called herself their mother, but she treated them more like a wicked stepmother. They served notice upon the half insane king and his stupid government—one of the ministers admitted that he did not even know where to find New York on the map!—that the American colonies refused to acknowledge the right of a government to rule over and tax them when they had nothing to say whether or how it should be done.

“No taxation without representation” came to be a war cry. No freedom without independence; no independence without separation, was the way the leaders in the Continental Congress had reasoned it out. So, when General Washington arrived in Congress, everything pointed toward severing their connection with England —cutting off their relations with the sword.

George Washington

There were loyalists there who let “‘I dare not’ wait upon ‘I would.’” These men did not see the distinction between loyalty and servility. Theirs was the faithfulness of the dog which cringes and clings the closer to the master who beats it.

Therefore, when the Washingtons arrived in Philadelphia, on the 23d of May, the liberty pot was boiling. The General agreed with the other heroes that the time had come to

“Strike for your altars and your fires . . .
God and your native land!”

Among the many matters brought to the General’s attention was that of a suitable flag to fly, when Congress should decide to separate from England and organize a new government. For the flag of the United Colonies—the standard of British subjects merely fighting for their rights—would no longer represent the lofty aim of the people of the thirteen colonies. If they broke away from the mother country they would no longer be United Colonies, but United States.

As it seemed to be a foregone conclusion that Congress would decide to separate, a secret committee, with General Washington as chairman,

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was appointed to devise a proper flag for the new nation. The best person to make the flag, that the General could think of, was a Mrs. Elizabeth Ross, a beautiful young Quakeress who had been disowned by the Society of Friends for marrying a young man, John Ross, "out of meeting," that is, one who was not a "birthright" Quaker. Ross had been engaged in guarding the ammunition on a dock on the Delaware River, and had died in the service of liberty, leaving his beloved Betsy a widow. She had supported herself by doing fine needlework and embroidery. She had taken care of Mr. Washington's frills and ruffles when he was a delegate to Congress in Philadelphia. Besides, Betsy Ross was a niece of Colonel George Ross, a member of the committee, and was known to be a "Free" Quaker in her sympathies. The Society of Friends has always been opposed to war, so those who were so interested in the cause of liberty, that some who were willing to give up their religious scruples and fight for it, were called Free or Fighting Quakers.

When General Washington called on the widow Ross, he showed her a modification of the flag of the United Colonies. It had the

George Washington

thirteen stripes, but, instead of the "union jack" for a canton, there was a blue field with a circle of thirteen white stars in the center of it. These stars were six-pointed. Mrs. Ross suggested that the five-pointed star would be easier to make. To prove this she took a square of white paper and folded it. Then she gave one clip of the scissors and snipped off part of one side. Opening this she showed the three gentlemen a beautiful white, five-pointed star. It seemed like magic to the delighted committee, and they agreed at once to adopt the five-pointed star for the new flag. This was wise, for the British star was six-pointed.

It is sometimes stated that General Washington got the idea for the first Flag from his own coat-of-arms. This was impossible, from the nature of the case and the nature of the man himself. The star in the coat-of-arms of the Washington family was five-pointed, and his design for the Flag called for the six-pointed star. Besides, the men of the Revolution were fighting against the distinctions of rank represented by family crests. Also, there were thirteen stripes in the Grand Union flag, designed by Franklin and others, which General Washington never

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saw until it was brought to him at his headquarters in Cambridge. Furthermore, white stars in a blue field had been used in a flag in South Carolina. So Washington's design was merely an adaptation of flags of the colonies, and of liberty, already in use. The new flag was not to be that of a monarch or of a noble family, but a banner of the people. That it was a flag of freedom was illustrated by the fact that those who made their own flags were at liberty to arrange the stars as they pleased, the only regulation being that there should be as many stars in the union of the Flag as States in the new Union of States.

Although the first Flag was made during the General's visit, and at once used in battle, it was not adopted for more than a year. Congress was more engrossed in sublime things for which the Flag of Freedom was yet to stand.

Washington has left on record his own idea of what was meant by his flag design:

“We take the star from Heaven, the red from our mother country, separating it by white stripes, thus showing that we have separated from her, and the white stripes shall go down to posterity representing liberty.”

George Washington

CHAPTER XIX

DECLARATION AND SEPARATION

THE General and his wife returned to New York on the 6th of June, before Richard Henry Lee, the friend “Dickey” of George Washington’s boyhood, moved that the United Colonies declare their independence of Great Britain. A committee of three—Thomas Jefferson of Virginia, Benjamin Franklin of Pennsylvania, and John Adams of Massachusetts—were appointed to draft a resolution stating the reasons why the United Colonies were to separate themselves from the mother country. This was written by Thomas Jefferson, was called the Declaration of Independence, and was one of the four great documents of history—the other three being the Magna Charta, the Compact in the “Mayflower,” and the Emancipation Proclamation.

The commander-in-chief must have been heartsick when he returned to that “badly armed, undisciplined, disorderly rabble,” which

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they called an army. When General Howe returned to the fray at New York, General Washington had only eight thousand well-armed men. Those who had no arms were told to bring spades, shovels, pickaxes or scythes fastened to the ends of poles. There were no uniforms, or equipments except in the case of a private company from Maryland. Those who could, dressed in a backwoods or Indian costume of fringed leather hunting-shirt and leggings, and a quilted cap like a bishop's miter, with CONGRESS in clumsy cloth letters sewed on the front.

These men went barefoot, having neither shoes nor moccasins, and presented a grotesque appearance. But the British, remembering Braddock's defeat, and the unerring marksmanship of the backwoodsmen, were as afraid of these crudely dressed militia as if they were the savages they appeared to be.

Meanwhile Congress was debating and passing and signing the resolution declaring the independence of the American colonies. The next and hardest thing would be to prove their independence.

This Declaration was passed on the Fourth of July, 1776. On the 9th it was read to an en-

George Washington

thusiastic mob in New York city. Some "Liberty Boys" threw down a huge gilded lead statue of George the Third, and hauled it away where patriotic women melted the lead up into thousands of bullets.

About this time a plot to murder or kidnap General Washington was discovered. A British deserter who had been placed in the General's body-guard had persuaded the Washingtons' housekeeper to let him put arsenic in some green peas the family were to eat. The maid consented, but disclosed the plot. The chief conspirator was publicly hanged, and none but known Americans were permitted to serve thereafter in General Washington's body-guard.

Soon Admiral Lord Howe, brother to the English general, arrived off New York with British warships. The Howes did their best to conciliate the revolutionists, but they were too late. Knowing the temper of the people and the terrible obstacles before him, General Washington wrote to his brother:

"We expect a bloody summer in New York and Canada."

The expedition to Quebec in spite of the heroic efforts of leaders and men, proved a failure.

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Meanwhile the Howes continued their overtures to bring about peace between England and her former colonies. But the people had had a taste of liberty, and the tardy efforts of the Howes proved useless. An incident which occurred at this time shows the friendliness of the Howes, who were Whigs and represented the spirit of the English people rather than that of their half-insane king. A letter was brought by a British officer from Lord Howe addressed to "George Washington, Esq." (As the British considered Washington merely the ringleader of a rebel mob, the officials did not wish to recognize him as "General.") The secretary refused to receive it for his chief. So it was returned to the writer and another official came, several days later, and presented to Washington, in person, an envelope addressed: "George Washington, Esq., &c., &c., &c.,"

The General, who had been warned, did not extend his hand for this letter, so the English officer laid it on the table before the commander, who eyed it quizzically.

"May it please your Excellency," urged the messenger, "that '&c., &c., &c.,' means *everything* that ought to follow."

George Washington

“Yes,” said General Washington, laughing, “and it may also mean *anything!*”

After considerable sparring, the General closed the interview by saying to the man, who had brought the letter from Lord Howe under flag of truce:

“This letter is directed to a planter of the State of Virginia. I shall have it delivered to him at the end of the war; till that time it shall not be opened.”

But he sent a more serious message to the Howes (who had announced that they had come on behalf of the king to grant pardons) in which he said: “Those who have committed no faults want no pardons.”

In referring to the difficulties besetting the commander-in-chief of the turbulent mob called the Colonial Army, and the insidious opposition offered by both British generals and the Continental Congress, old John Adams, philosopher and statesman, wrote of Washington:

“It takes more serenity of temper, a deeper understanding, and more courage than fell to the lot of Marlborough to ride this whirlwind!”

If ever a general snatched “victory from the jaws of defeat,” it was George Washington.

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After the siege and capture of Boston, his career in the Revolution was a series of defeats. As the overtures of the British crown had been repeatedly rejected by the General, the order of battle was “on once more.” For a general to try to hold out against such great forces on sea and land bespoke the loftiest faith in the noble cause as well as the highest genius. He had intrenched himself on Long Island. On the morning of August 27th, before the battle began there, he was heard to cry out: “My God, what brave men I must this day lose!”

But he went out and calmly ordered two days’ rations of bread and pork given to the men, and gave them this command:

“Be cool and determined; do not fire at a distance, but wait for orders from your officers.”

The inevitable came to pass. The British overwhelmed the small American force, and lay on their arms that night, ready to surround and capture their virtual prisoners next morning. A dense fog came up in the night. General Washington was keen and ready to take advantage of anything in his favor. Securing ferry-boats and other craft, he stole away in the mist and darkness and crossed to the mainland above

George Washington

New York during the night. In the morning, when the British commander put forth his hand to take the "nest of rebels," as he called them—the birds had flown!

For month after month, lengthening into years, the war seemed to hold little for the poor American army but defeats and retreats, hardships and privations, hunger and cold, darkness and despair. Yet throughout it all, many master minds, since that day, have pronounced George Washington a genius as an opportunist and strategist.

Still, he seemed to the contemptuous British little more than an ingenuous, persistent leader running around New York and across New Jersey, hurrying his hopeless company of tramps just ahead of the pursuing red-coats. They stopped at Kip's Bay, White Plains and Fort Washington, long enough to shoot, scatter and run away again. For them it was victory, as at Long Island, to escape and keep going. Flying across "the Jerseys," the dauntless leader arranged for two wonderful strokes of strategy. One was to send on ahead to Robert Morris in Philadelphia—the third member of the Flag committee—who became "the Financier

The Story of Young

of the Revolution," to ask him to raise funds enough to pay the men whose time was to expire on New Year's Day. Washington had exhausted his own available funds, so he had no more money for his beloved soldiers. If they could not be paid they would disband, and he would lose even his ragged regiments and the cause would be lost after all.

The second stroke was the crossing of the Delaware on the bitterly cold Christmas night of 1776, pushing their perilous way among great blocks of ice through the rushing current. At Trenton, on the opposite side, they surprised the Hessians, or German hired soldiers, and, by winning a victory, inspired the soldiers, who were now worse than ragged, for they had left their bloody footprints in the snow. The only men lost at Trenton were frozen to death on that dreadful night.

Trenton was a small but famous victory. It was the turning of the tide of the Revolution. Robert Morris, aided by Quakers who would not fight but did help by furnishing part of "the sinews of war," sent the money needed to pay the men—to their great astonishment—and they re-enlisted on the first of January, 1777.

George Washington

On the third of January, the newly inspired troops won the battle of Princeton, by meeting the British in two separate companies and defeated both. This time "the Old Fox," as Cornwallis called the American "ringleader," escaped from him in the night to beat the British in detachments.

The next glimpse of Washington is in Robert Morris's office in Philadelphia, pleading for more money for his men and the cause. Morris, in misery himself, had to tell the heroic chief that he also was at the end of his resources. A clerk in the office related that the General sat there for some time in silence, covering his face with his great hands, while tears oozed out between his fingers and trickled down his wrists. Then he rose and went out without a word, and met the British and defeat at Brandywine. Also, through lack of ammunition and the blundering of a drunken officer, he suffered another set-back at Germantown in a fog so dense that his men could scarcely distinguish friend from foe.

After this came that "long and dreary winter" at Valley Forge, where many of his men froze and starved to death, while the British were feasting and reveling in Philadelphia,

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twenty miles away. More than any one else, Washington fought out the Revolution unaided and alone. Congress hampered and baffled him worse than the British. His leading generals, Lee and Gates, turned against him. There were jealous men in the Congress who sneered and conspired against him. It seems a miracle that he endured it all, and finally came off more than conqueror. Even Conway, whose name was given to the great conspiracy known as “the ‘Conway Cabal,’” having been wounded in a duel, made this confession:

“You are in my eyes the great and good man. May you long enjoy the love, veneration and esteem of these States, whose liberties you have asserted by your virtues.”

Canon Sutherland, an eminent Englishman, explains how he did it all:

“Unaided, unsupported, disobeyed,
Thwarted, maligned, conspired against,
betrayed—
Yet nothing could unheart him.
Wouldst thou know
His secret? There, in the thicket on
the snow,
Washington knelt before his God and
prayed.”

George Washington

But the end of “treasons, stratagems and spoils” was not yet. At Monmouth, New Jersey, the battle in which Moll Pitcher fired the cannon left by a dead gunner; Charles Lee, who had been captured and released by the British, attempted to betray the American army into the hands of the enemy. Lafayette saved the day by riding up to Washington and telling him what was going on. The General, with face white and eyes ablaze, swore at his treacherous general, and ordered him to the rear. Congress believed Lee was innocent of wrong intent, but, eighty years after, proof that the jealous general had been bribed was discovered.

Washington’s sufferings through false friends were augmented by the greed of false patriots. Along with French help, gained through the efforts of old Franklin and young Lafayette, came the humiliating spectacle of American “speculators, peculators,” as he indignantly called those “business” buzzards, who would even murder the soldiers to fatten upon them!

The next blow—more deadly to the heart of Washington—was the treason of the brave Benedict Arnold, through the brilliant André, the young British officer who wrote the farce for the

The Story of Young

British in Boston, and planned the pageant of the “Mischianza,” in Philadelphia while Washington’s men were freezing and starving at Valley Forge. When the commander heard what General Arnold had done, he clasped his great hands high above his head in his despair, and cried, brokenly:

“Whom *can* we trust now?”

Next, the General was chained to the neighborhood of New York, to watch and shut Clinton in that city, while ruin was running riot in the South. To his nephew who had fed the British troops to save Mount Vernon, “Uncle George” wrote indignantly:

“It would have been less painful to me to have heard that they had burnt my house and laid the plantation in ruins. You ought to have considered yourself as my representative, and should have reflected on the bad example!”

At last, came the good news of French help, and “the Old Fox” slipped away from near New York. He was too far on his way south, “to catch Cornwallis in his mousetrap,” to be overtaken when General Clinton found out that he had gone.

Cornwallis was trapped in Yorktown, and,

George Washington

with the aid of the French fleet and marines, that city was surrounded and bombarded. It soon capitulated. When the flower of the British army marched out, an American band struck up "Yankee Doodle," which had been played in derision by the British at the beginning of the war. The English band ruefully responded with, "The World's Turned Upside Down!" Before Cornwallis's men passed, General Washington exhorted the American soldiers:

"My brave fellows, let no sense of satisfaction for the triumphs you have gained induce you to insult your fallen enemy. Let no shouting, no clamorous huzzahing increase their mortification. Posterity will huzzah for us."

Washington would not humiliate Lord Cornwallis even by accepting his sword in public. He sent an officer to receive it privately.

He gave a supper to Rochambeau and other French officers, and invited Cornwallis as if he were one of his allies. When the others gave their toasts, Cornwallis was invited to propose one. He mechanically presented: "The King of England." Though this was deemed an offense, General Washington courteously announced it in compliment to his guest, and added "May he

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stay there!" in a stage whisper so whimsical that even Cornwallis had to laugh. General Washington's unique kindness made Lord Cornwallis his friend for life.

But the cruel war was not yet over. The articles of peace were not signed for one and a half years more. On the 19th of April, 1783, the eighth anniversary of the battles of Lexington and Concord, there was sung at Washington's headquarters at Newburgh, New York, this hymn:

"INDEPENDENCE"

"The States, O Lord, with songs of
praise,
Shall in thy strength rejoice,
And blessed with thy salvation raise
To heaven their cheerful voice;
And all the Continent shall sing:
Down with this earthly king—
No king but God!
No king but God!"

General Washington's farewell at Fraunces' tavern in New York, when he wept while his officers kissed him good-bye, is one of the familiar scenes of history. He sobbed as he said to them:

George Washington

“With a heart full of love and gratitude, I now take leave of you. I devoutly wish that your latter days may be as prosperous and happy as your former ones have been glorious and honorable.”

At Annapolis, where Congress was in session, he rendered the statement of his stewardship for his beloved country. While accounting for the uttermost farthing, he accepted nothing for his inestimable services for those eight long, hard years.

Then he resigned his commission as commander-in-chief. He received a wonderful meed of praise that seemed almost too much for any human being—the address, the greatest tribute of all, being delivered by one of his former enemies in the Conway Cabal. If Washington felt like laughing he made no sign. On hearing of all this a French orator exclaimed :

“How small ambitious Cæsar seems
beside the hero of America!”

Then he came to his “Vine-and-Figtree”—Mount Vernon—for which he had yearned day and night through the long eight years of the

The Story of Young

war. How happy he was there—a private citizen once more—with his horses and dogs and crops and neighbors and all!

But he had to leave his beautiful home again, to preside over the convention which formulated the Constitution of the United States.

There his mildest wish was law, and the universal love and esteem in which he was held was the common bond which drew the rival States together into a full Union. After that they unanimously elected him the first President of the now United States. He wrote to a friend that he felt like a malefactor going to execution, as he left his beloved Mount Vernon for New York to take the reins of government.

The last thing he did before going was to say farewell to his aged mother. He never saw her again. She died, during a critical illness he himself suffered during his first term of office. They could not tell him till he was well and strong enough to bear the shock.

He was elected President for a second term, and again went through the irksome duties of the presidency with the same fortitude that he had shown during the great war.

When it was all over and he had delivered that

George Washington

parting benediction, known in history as Washington's Farewell Address, he was happy to retire again to his beautiful estate.

Nelly Custis, his adopted daughter, was married to Lawrence Lewis, his sister Betty's son, on his last birthday, in 1799. She used to say that he was full of pranks as a college student. He greatly enjoyed playing tricks. Indeed, he seems to have considered his war strategies as practical jokes on a large scale.

He was exceedingly fond of the society of young people, and noticed, with keen regret, that his presence overawed them. So he would lead in the opening quadrille, a new dance introduced by French officers, or the stately minuet, gravely say good-night to them and bow himself out. Sometimes he would order a door left open, so that he could slip behind it and watch the young folks awhile through the crack, thus enjoying the entertainment which the awe of his conscious presence had denied him.

* * * *

Because of his dignity and diffidence—while he was President he was almost as bashful as a schoolboy—and because he is pictured with a powdered wig, Washington is thought of only

The Story of Young

as an old man. It would have pained him deeply if he could have known this; for his keen sympathy with young people kept him so young at heart that "The Story of Young George Washington" ought not to end until his dying day.

After he was gone, the whole nation and lovers of liberty all over the world were in sorrow and mourning. Congress assembled to listen to a tribute by one who knew and loved him well. The man chosen for this great honor was Colonel Henry Lee, the "Light-horse Harry" of the Revolution. Colonel Lee was one of Washington's young friends during and after the Revolution. He afterwards became the father of General Robert E. Lee, the greatest of all the Lees of the Virginia of a later day. It was "Light-horse Harry" who first described Washington in the now world-familiar words:

*"First in war, first in peace, and first
in the hearts of his countrymen."*

THE END

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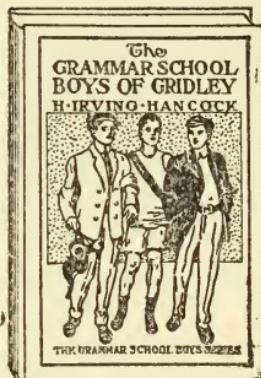
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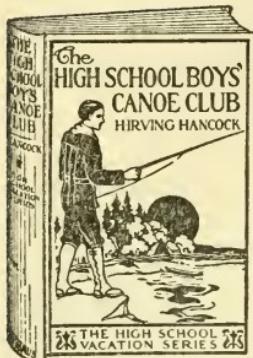
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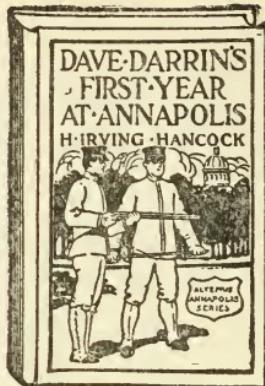
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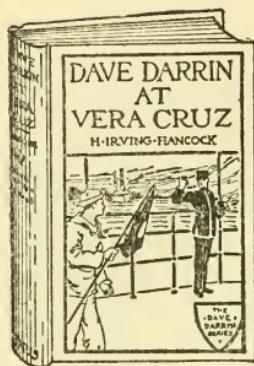


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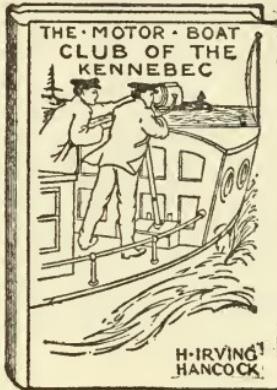
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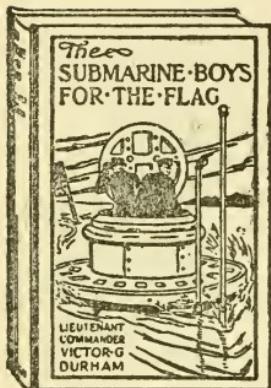


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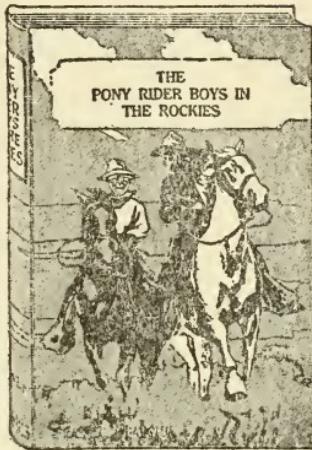
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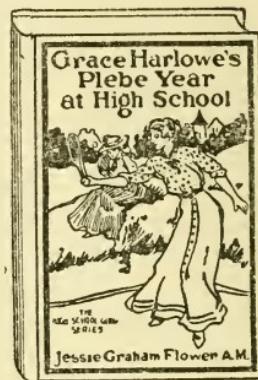
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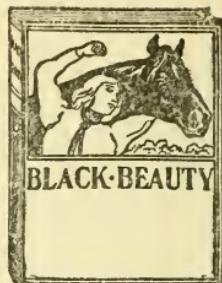
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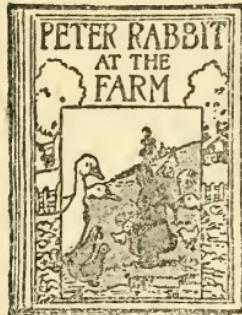
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